The Beaver

WINTER 1972

'Christmas at Morgan's' *Adrien Hebert*

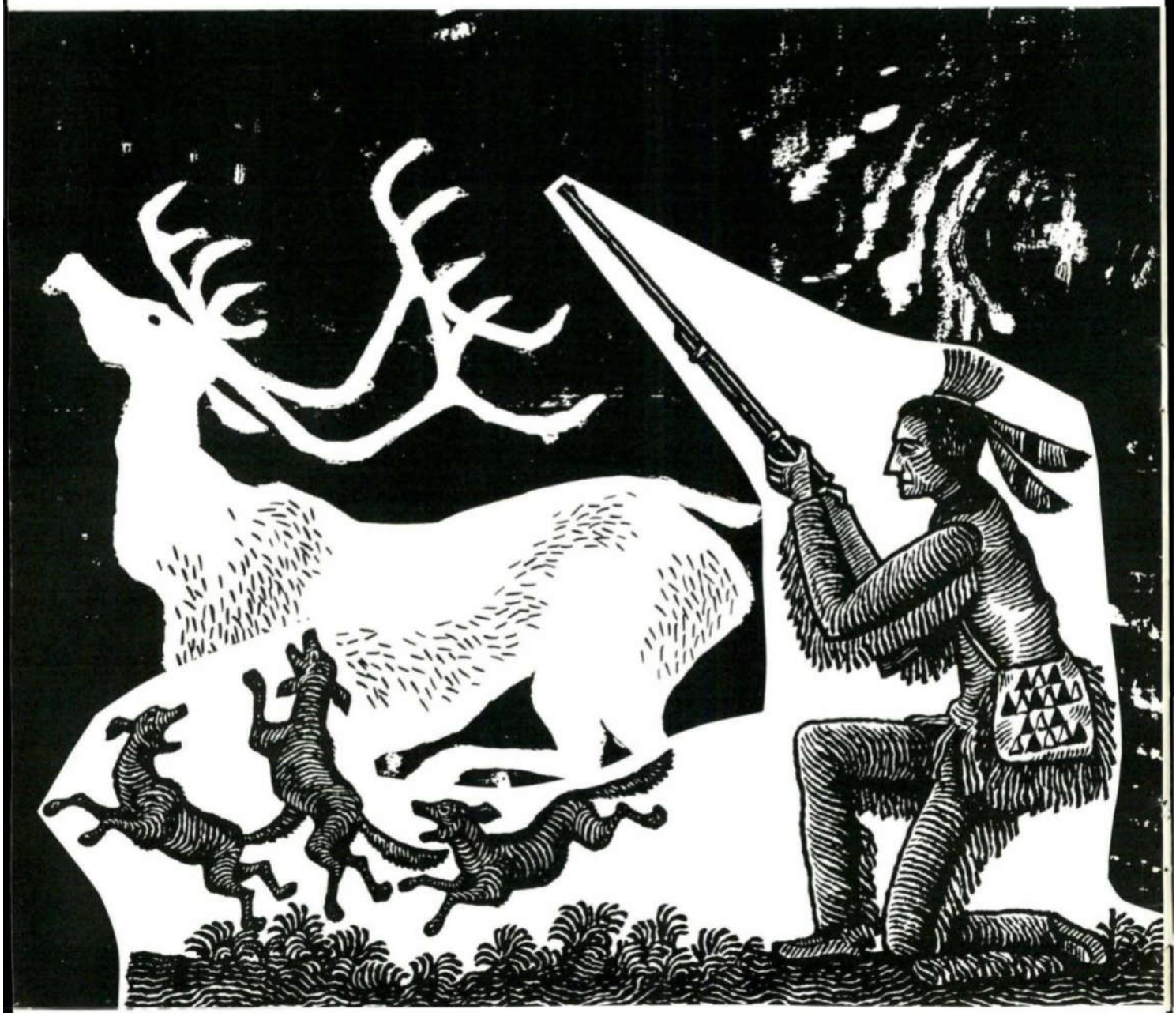
THE UNCHANGED STANDARD: "choice goods as can be bought for money"

"...Wee have been as carefull to answer your desier as to the goodness and quallity of your trading goods, guns especially giveing the makers a great charge to amend those faults you complaine of in your Letter, wee have also endeavoured to gett you good hatchetts and Ice Chissells such as will be serviceable and strong according to the Patterns sent us; & that will please the Indians for you may be suer it is our Interest to have good goods..."

LETTER TO GOVERNOR GEYER, PORT NELSON, FROM THE GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE, LONDON, MAY 21, 1691

Hudson's Bay Company

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670



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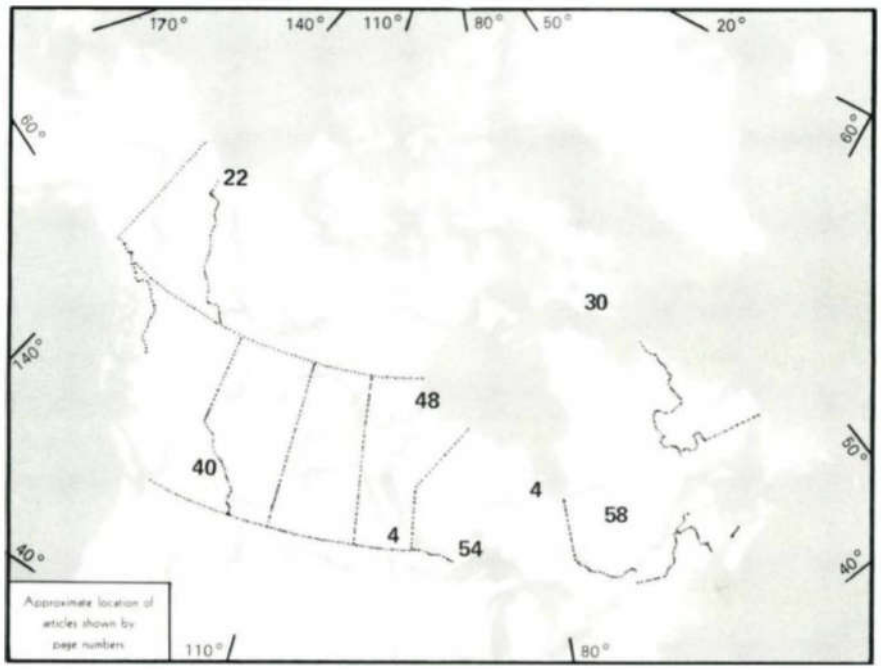

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COVER: 'Christmas at Morgan's' was painted in Montreal c.1934 by Adrien Hébert

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WOMEN AND THE FUR TRADE

BY SYLVIA VAN KIRK

The author, originally from Edmonton, Alberta, is reading for her Ph.D. under the guidance of Dr Glyndwr Williams at the University of London.

DURING THE EARLY PERIOD of the fur trade, the white man faced a situation in which, for practical purposes, the social norms of European civilization were no longer operable. Since colonization was not envisaged, no white women accompanied the fur traders. Family units which would have reflected, in however rough a state, their former domestic life were impossible. Instead, the traders were forced to come to terms with an alien, nomadic culture; their livelihood depended upon the very existence of the Indian whose way of life gave him distinct advantages in coping with the wilderness environment. In this light, the Indian woman played an important role as a liaison between the two cultures. Trained in the skills necessary for survival, a native woman, while filling the role of wife and mother left void by the absence of white women, was uniquely qualified to help the white trader adapt to the exigencies of life in Rupert's Land.

The men of the Montreal-based North West Company, who had inherited the framework and traditions of the French colonial fur trade, had always appreciated the economic advantages of alliances with Indian women. Besides helping to secure the trade of her tribe or band, the Indian woman did much to familiarize the Nor'Wester with Indian life and in teaching him the native tongue greatly contributed to his effectiveness as a trader. In contrast, the London Committee, the remote ruling body of the Hudson's Bay Company, had early forbidden any dealings between its servants and Indian women on the grounds that the expense which would accrue from their support plus the possible danger of affronting Indian sensibilities outweighed any advantages to be derived. In practice, this regulation proved difficult to enforce. Although it prevented the practice of taking Indian wives from becoming widespread within the lower ranks of the English Company, keeping an Indian woman became the prerogative of an officer in charge of a post.

When forced into open competition with the Nor'-Westers in the late decades of the 18th century, the Hudson's Bay Company was compelled to modify its policy towards Indian women. In attempting to recruit the highly prized French-Canadian voyageur into its service, the Company was made aware that the right to have an Indian helpmate was not one which the Canadian would relinquish lightly, and this attitude influenced its own men. In 1802, the council at York Factory appealed to the London Committee, stressing that their Indian women were in fact 'your Honors Servants' and played an important economic role in the struggle against the rival concern:

> . . . they clean and put into a state of preservation all Beavr. and Otter skins brought by the Indians undried and in bad Condition. They prepare Line for Snow shoes and knit them also without which your Honors servants could not give efficient opposition to the Canadian traders they make Leather shoes for the men who are obliged to travel about in search of Indians and furs and are usefull in a variety of other instances . . .

By the time of the union of the two companies in 1821, taking a native woman for a wife was a widespread social practice, known as marriage *à la façon du pays*. Although it might involve the payment of a bride price, a country marriage was an informal arrangement whereby a couple agreed to cohabit for an unspecified length of time. It derived from the Indian concept of marriage and was but one example of the extent to which the social mores and customs of the Indians influenced the norms of fur-trade society. As the explorer Sir John Franklin remarked, the white man seemed 'to find it easier to descend to the Indian customs, and modes of thinking, particularly with respect to women, than to attempt to raise the Indians to theirs.' The first missionaries, who arrived relatively late in Rupert's Land, were horrified by what they considered to be the Europeans' uncivilized treatment of their Indian wives. Such usage, however, reflected the position of women in Indian society. Partly through economic necessity, they were subjected to an endless round of domestic drudgery, even to the extent of being reduced to beasts of burden. The excuse was advanced that if the white man displayed tender feelings towards his wife, the Indian, to whom such notions were foreign, would despise him. It is likely, however, that within the fur-trade post, European conventions did tend to ameliorate the Indian woman's lot, particularly in the higher ranks of the service where she would have shared in her husband's privileges.

Although there were occasions (especially during the drunken days of the trade war) when Indian women were abused by the traders, in general an unwritten code of honour developed; marriage *à la façon du pays* was considered to be as binding as any church ceremony in the Indian Country. There were many examples of a

THE WEST POINT MUSEUM COLLECTIONS — UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

'Indian Women in Tent' by P. Rindisbacher.

lasting and honourable relationship developing between the white trader and his Indian helpmate, and the domestic pleasures of family life undoubtedly did much to reconcile the European to the isolated and monotonous life of a fur-trade post.

The greatest social problem occurred when the trader retired from Rupert's Land. It became customary to forsake one's Indian family for it proved extremely difficult for the wife in particular to make the transition to 'civilized' living whether in Great Britain or the Canadas. In the early days of the fur trade, when widowed or abandoned, an Indian wife with her children had been welcomed back into her tribe. This became increasingly rare as the structure of Indian society crumbled through the effects of European contact. It was also not feasible for the half-breed woman, who knew little of life outside the fur-trade post, and from whose growing ranks many wives were chosen in the early decades of the 19th century. A practice which was dubbed 'turning off' arose, by which the retiring husband endeavoured to assure that his spouse was placed under the protection of or became the country wife of another fur trader. Such had been the fate of the kind-hearted washerwoman Betsey who, when Letitia Hargrave encountered her at York Factory in 1840, was not sure whether her last protector had been her fourth or fifth husband. Although it was fairly common for fathers to bequeath some money for the maintenance of their country-born children, they were not legally compelled to do so. As a result, during the decades immediately preceding the union of the two companies, the number of deserted women and children being maintained at the expense of the posts, especially those of the North West Company, had reached alarming proportions. In an attempt to reduce this heavy economic burden, the North West proprietors ruled as early as 1806 that in future its servants were to choose only half-breed women as wives. They also contemplated the creation of a settlement in the Rainy Lake area where their superannuated servants, particularly the French-Canadian voyageurs, could retire with their Indian families.

The whole question was pushed into the background by the struggle for the control of the fur trade, but when

Pencil sketch taken by Rindisbacher in the Red River colony, c. 1825.
The sketch forms the basis for his water-colour entitled 'A Halfcast and his Two Wives'.

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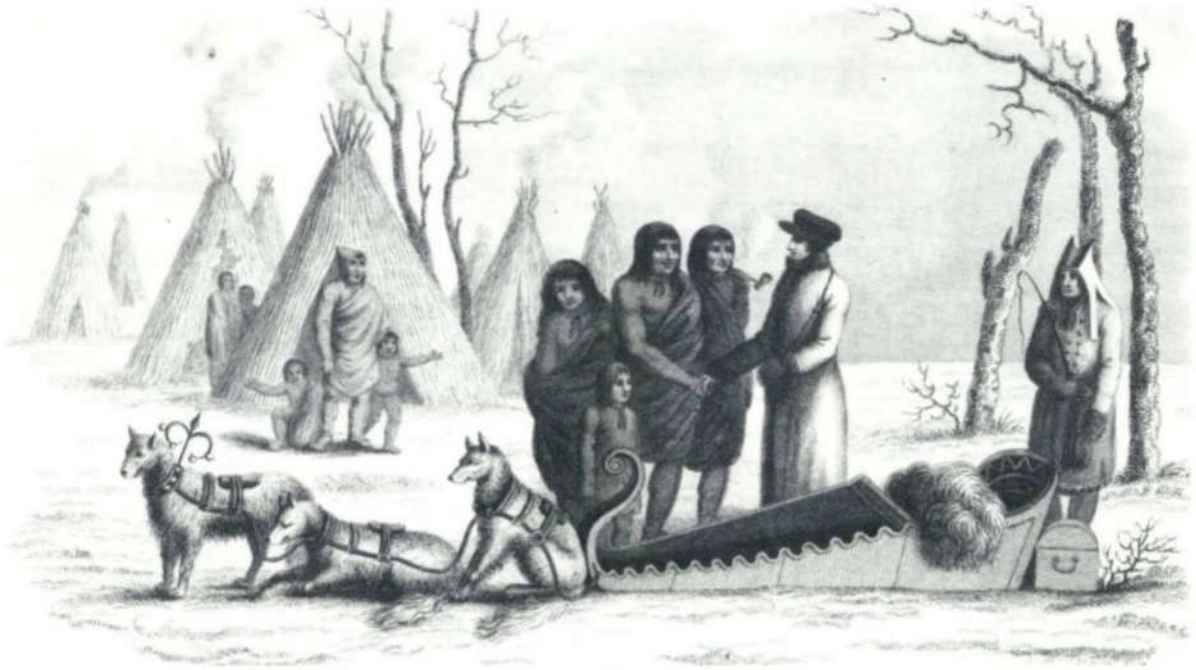


The Reverend John West, the Company's first chaplain in Indian Country, visits an encampment.

the Hudson's Bay Company absorbed its rival in 1821, the London Committee recognized that steps must be taken to solve this pressing social problem, if only for reasons of economy and security:

> We understand that there are an immense number of Women and Children, supported at the different Trading Posts, some belonging to men still in the Service and others who have been left by the Fathers unprotected and a burden on the Trade. It becomes . . . a serious consideration, how these People are to be disposed of . . .

Philanthropic considerations also influenced Company policy at this time, mainly through the efforts of Benjamin Harrison, a prominent member of the Committee and an associate of the Clapham Sect. He played an important part in developing a plan for the settlement of these families in the fledgling colony of Red River which had been founded in the previous decade by the idealistic Lord Selkirk. A Catholic mission already existed to minister to the large French-Canadian sector, and several Anglican clergymen were sent out under Company auspices who, with the help of the Church Missionary Society, were to establish a school for orphan children. In a marked change of policy, the London Committee also encouraged those servants who did not wish to retire in Rupert's Land to take their families with them provided they possessed sufficient means for their support.

At the same time, as part of its program of economy and consolidation, the Committee endeavoured to divest the Company of any further responsibility for the support of the families of the traders who remained at the various posts. Although they acknowledged that those few women who performed really essential services might be paid in goods or provisions, in future each man was to clothe his family on his own private account, and a proportional tax was to be imposed to cover the cost of provisions. They also proposed the creation of a prorated benefit fund to provide for the maintenance of a wife and family in the event of the decease of the husband or his retirement from the country. The men objected to being forced to make an annual payment towards the present or future support of their families, the lower ranks in particular claiming that their salaries were not high enough to bear this additional expense. The Committee eventually conceded this point, but only after it was established as a general rule:

> That no Officer or Servant in the companys service be hereafter allowed to take a woman without binding himself down to such reasonable provision for the maintenance of the woman and children as on a fair and equitable principle may be considered necessary not only during their residence in the country but after their departure hence . . .

The Hudson's Bay Company gave official status to marriage *à la façon du pays* by introducing a marriage contract which emphasized the husband's economic responsibilities. Although there is some variation in the actual format of the certificates which survive in the Company's records, usually both parties signed or made their mark on a document which declared that the woman was recognized as a legal wife. In retrospect, since the Hudson's Bay Company was vested with governmental power over Rupert's Land, these contracts can be seen as an early form of civil marriage. The prerogative of the Church in this sphere, however, was

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Home of the Reverend John West at Red River. P. Rindisbacher.

acknowledged by the proviso that the couple would undertake to be married by a clergyman at the first possible opportunity.

The Company's first chaplain, the Reverend John West, considered this to be one of his most pressing duties upon his arrival in the Indian Country in the fall of 1820. He proclaimed that 'the institution of marriage' along with 'the security of property' were 'the fundamental laws' of any civilized society. When he left Rupert's Land three years later, the worthy parson had performed a total of sixty-five marriages, among them those of several prominent settlers in Red River, former Company officers who had continued to live with their Indian wives *à la façon du pays*. His success was greeted with approbation by Nicholas Garry, a visiting member of the London Committee, who considered the practices of the Indian Country most demoralizing:

> . . . Mr. West has done much good in persuading these Gentlemen to marry . . . thus introducing more proper Feelings and preventing that Debasement of Mind which must, at last, have rooted out every honourable and right Feeling. Perhaps nothing shows Debasement of Mind so much as their having lived themselves in an unmarried State, giving up their Daughters to live the same Life as their Mothers, and this Feeling, or rather its Justification, had become general all over the Country . . .

Clearly the moral code of fur-trade society was in a state of confusion. It was the missionaries themselves who emphasized the concept of 'living in sin', for many fur traders, and certainly the Indians, considered a country marriage to be a legal and honourable union. While officially the Company was attempting to introduce accepted Christian standards into fur-trade life, as can be seen in a list of regulations designed to effect 'the civilization and moral improvement' of the families attached to the various posts, it is difficult to estimate the actual success of these measures. Although the social and religious conventions of European society were undoubtedly taking hold in the basically agrarian settlement of Red River, the old norms of fur-trade society persisted, especially in isolated areas. In 1825 George Simpson, the Governor of the Northern Department, advised that any missionary appointed to the Columbia District across the Rockies would be wise to let the custom of the country alone:

> . . . he ought to understand in the outset that nearly all the Gentlemen & Servants have Families altho' Marriage ceremonies are unknown in the Country and that it would be all in vain to attempt breaking through this uncivilized custom.

When Simpson was appointed Governor of the vast territories of the Northern Department in 1821, he had

had only one year of experience in the Indian Country as a trader in opposition to the Nor'Westers on Lake Athabasca. He soon proved himself a capable administrator and his hard-headed, often pragmatic approach to business is reflected in his official views on the position of Indian women in fur-trade society.

Simpson's journal of his winter in Athabasca reveals his appreciation of the valuable economic role played by Indian women in the functioning of the fur trade. Besides performing such routine tasks as making moccasins and collecting *wattappe* for sewing the birch-bark canoes, they were essential as interpreters. In enumerating the reasons for the strong position of the Nor'-Westers at Fort Chipewyan, Simpson declared:

> . . . their Women are faithful to their cause and good Interpreters whereas we have but one in the Fort (Lamallice's Wife) that can talk Chipewyan . . .

This one was the crafty Madame Lamallice, the wife of the brigade guide, who was not only adept at hoarding provisions but even managed to carry on a private trade. Simpson, concerned that this couple, who possessed much influence over the Indians, would desert to the rival concern, was forced to wink at these misdemeanours and urged the disgruntled post commander to humour them with flattery and a few extra rations.

In making plans to extend the Company's trade into the remote areas of New Caledonia and the Mackenzie River, formerly the preserve of the North West Company, the Governor emphasized the value of marriage alliances. Early in the spring of 1821, he engaged Pering [Perrin], a French-Canadian, to help establish a depot on Great Slave Lake primarily because his wife was 'extensively connected amongst the Yellow Knife and Chipewyan Tribes in that quarter. . . and will be enabled to remove any prejudice that our Opponents may have instilled on their minds against us.' Viewing the Committee's policy of discouraging liaisons with Indian women as detrimental to the Company's expansion, he recommended that in New Caledonia the Gentlemen should form connections with the principal families immediately upon their arrival as 'the best security we can have of the goodwill of the Natives.'

During his rapid tours of the posts in the early 1820s however, Simpson became increasingly aware of the problems caused by the large numbers of women and children being supported in the more established areas, and he favoured the Committee's proposed economic reforms. A major source of inefficiency and expense was the practice of allowing families, particularly those of the officers, to accompany the brigades on the long summer journey to and from the main depot at York Factory. Simpson's low opinion of one Chief Factor, John Clarke, was confirmed when Clarke abandoned some of the goods destined for Athabasca *en route* to make a light canoe for the better accommodation of his half-breed wife and her servant – an extravagance which Simpson estimated had cost the Company five hundred pounds. After his visit to the Columbia in 1824-25, the Governor further decried the extent to which family considerations hindered the expedition of business:

> . . . We must really put a stop to the practise of Gentlemen bringing their Women & Children from the East to the

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Indian women at Fort Ellice, from a sketch by Sydney Hall.

West side of the Mountain, it is attended with much expense and inconvenience on the Voyage, business itself must give way to domestick considerations, the Gentlemen become drones and are not disposible in short the evil is more serious than I am well able to describe.

The following year, the annual session of the Council passed a resolution stating that gentlemen appointed to the two districts across the Rockies were not to encumber themselves with families.

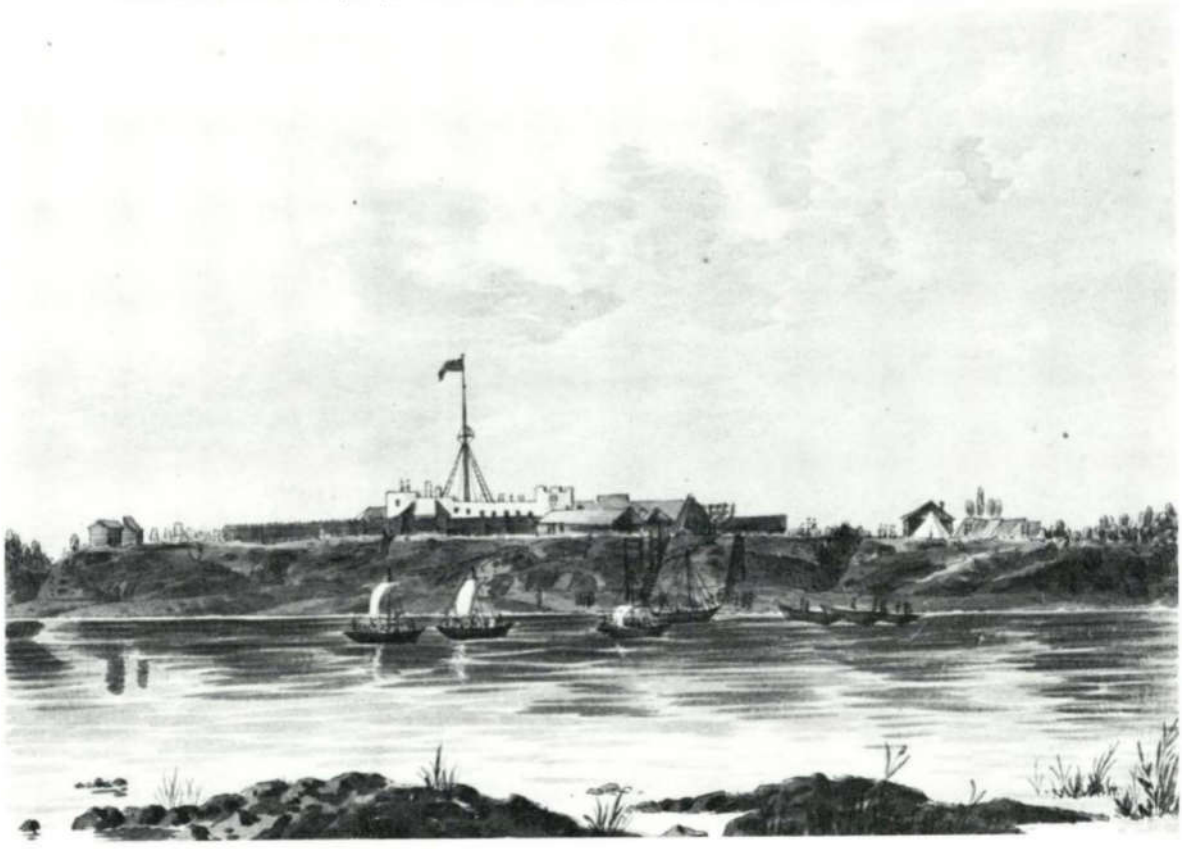
Although Indian women were relegated by custom to an inferior status, the ladies of the country appear to have exerted a surprising influence over their fur-trader husbands. Simpson was appalled by the widespread power of these 'petty coat politicians', whose interests he suspected even affected the decisions of top-ranking officers. In expressing his dissatisfaction with Chief Factor James Bird's management of the Company's business at Red River, he lamented 'I find that every matter however triffling or important is discussed wh. his Copper Cold. Mate before decided on and from her it finds its way all over the Colony.' Likewise, he described Mrs McDonald, the country wife of the officer in charge at Fort Qu'Appelle, as 'a stout good looking Dame not master p. Force but through persuasion & cunning'. In the Columbia District, the Governor claimed, two out of the three Chief Traders were completely under the control of their women. They frequently neglected business in their jealous attempts to 'guard against certain innocent indiscretions which these frail brown ones are so apt to indulge in.'

If the irregularities in the workings of the trade caused by native families disturbed Simpson, he was even more adamant that the Indian Country was no place for a white woman. In a private letter to Committee member Andrew Colvile, he expressed concern that the example of three of the Company's officers in taking wives from among the Red River settlers in the early 1820s might establish a trend which he considered most undesirable:

> . . . it not only frustrates the intentions of the Company and executors, in respect to the Colony, but is a clog on the gentlemen who take them . . . native women are a serious incumbrance but with women from the civilized world, it is quite impossible the gentlemen can do their duty.'

In light of his *own* subsequent experience Simpson could perhaps have shown a little compassion for the marital difficulties of some of his contemporaries. His extraordinary private correspondence with his close friend Chief Factor John George McTavish reveals a Simpson curiously different from the person his official

York Fort as it was in the fall of 1821 when Governor Simpson arrived with Betsey Sinclair. P. Rindishacher.



PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Governor George Simpson.

pronouncements would lead one to expect. For a novice, he adapted with ease to the social conventions of Rupert's Land, succumbing as readily as any Nor'Wester to the charms of the ladies of the country.

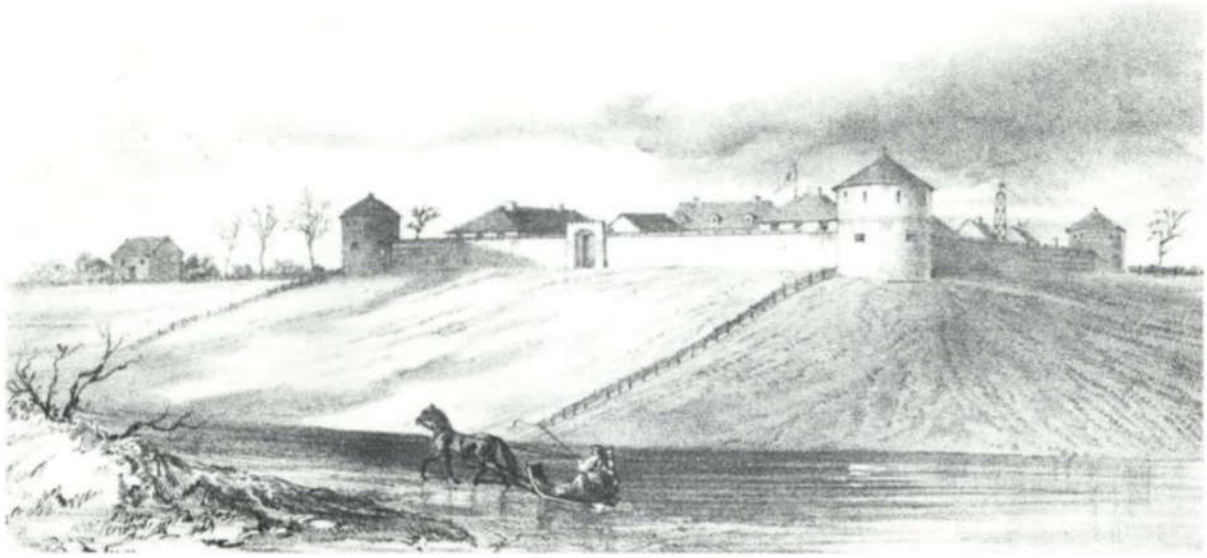
Sometime during his first winter, possibly at Oxford House, Simpson was attracted to a damsel called Betsey Sinclair, a daughter of the late Chief Factor William Sinclair and his native wife Nahovway. Although she accompanied him to York Factory in the fall of 1821, the newly appointed Governor soon found her presence bothersome. He left Betsey at York when he embarked on a tour of inland posts in December and shortly afterward instructed McTavish, then in charge of the Factory, to see that she was 'forwarded' in the spring to the Rock Depot where her brother-in-law Thomas Bunn was stationed. Simpson's rather cavalier references to this woman as 'my japan helpmate' or 'my article' suggest that he himself may never have thought of her as a country wife in the true sense. That many of his contemporaries considered her as such is revealed by an entry in the York Fort Journal dated 10 February 1822 which reads: 'Mrs. Simpson was delivered of a Daughter.' Although the Governor was at York when this infant was christened Maria by the Reverend John West on August 27, he was still determined to avoid the encumbrance of a family. The proposal to place Betsey under the care of Thomas Bunn had been abandoned, but Simpson departed in early September for an extensive tour of the Athabasca and Peace River districts, leaving it to McTavish to settle the matter expeditiously:

> My Family concerns I leave entirely to your kind management, if you can dispose of the Lady it will be satisfactory as she is an unnecessary & expensive appendage, I see no fun in keeping a Woman without enjoying her charms which my present rambling Life does not enable me to do . . .

He needlessly expressed concern for her virtue. Not long after his departure, Betsey Sinclair became the country wife of the clerk Robert Miles, a high-minded Englishman, who had spent the winter of 1820-21 with Simpson in the Athabasca country. The match was celebrated in the customary fashion by a dance and supper where liquid cheer flowed freely, and the couple were reported to be very happy. Betsey bore Miles at least eight children and retired with him to Upper Canada.

Despite protestations that he was too busy to be bothered by domestic considerations, the Governor seems to have found time to indulge his inclination during his tours of the Company's domains. In fact, he confided to McTavish that he suspected his amours were gaining him a notorious reputation. Although the identities of the recipients of his favours remain obscure, it is known that in 1823 a son named James Keith Simpson was born.

Maria Simpson, daughter of Governor George Simpson.



View of Upper Fort Garry, c. 1852.

Simpson, however, appears to have made a distinction between the behaviour he considered appropriate in that motley outpost of civilization, the Red River Colony, and the behaviour acceptable in the rest of the Indian Country. While wintering at Fort Garry in 1823-24, he apparently held aloof from romantic entanglements, describing himself as one of the most 'examplary Batchelors' in the settlement. Furthermore, in spite of his country romances, the intention of returning to England to marry seems to have been in the back of the Governor's mind during this period. Who the object of his affection was is not known, although it is established that Simpson had another daughter in Scotland called Maria, born before he left for Rupert's Land. He was cautioned by his mentor Andrew Colvile against taking any hasty action, however:

> A wife I fear would be an embarrassment to you until the business gets into more complete order & until the necessity of those distant journies is over & if it be delayed one or two years you will be able to accumulate something before the expense of a family comes upon you.

Simpson acquiesced and set off in the fall of 1824 on his tour across the Rockies to the Columbia. While at Fort George, he was at pains to prevent himself from being drawn into the system of marriage alliances which had helped to secure the loyalty of the powerful Chinook nation especially the great Chief Concomely. It was considered most prestigious among the 'aristocracy' of this highly complex tribe to claim a fur trader for a son-in-law. A most assiduous social climber was an influential personage known as 'Lady Calpo', who on more than one occasion had warned the fort of impending treachery. She proved a valuable source of information for Simpson, but he found himself in a delicate situation when this old dame, in order to reaffirm her rank, endeavoured to secure him as a husband for her carefully raised daughter:

> I have therefore a difficult card to play being equally desirous to keep clear of the Daughter and continue on good terms with the Mother and by management I hope to succeed in both altho her Ladyship is most pressing & persevering . . .

Simpson seems to have succumbed to some extent for if the Chinooks expressed sorrow at his departure in the spring, 'the fair Princess "Chowie" ', he suspected, was not the least grieved.

When Simpson returned to Red River to wind up business prior to sailing for England, he found a situation which likely made him reconsider the feasibility of bringing a European wife to Rupert's Land. The new governor of the settlement, Captain R. P. Pelly, now felt compelled to return to England owing to the ill health of his wife, who only two short years before had accompanied her husband out to Red River. This was a great disappointment to Simpson as he had hoped Pelly would be able to effect some order and stability in the chaotic affairs of the colony. While every effort had been made to ensure the material comfort of the family, Simpson himself had noted that 'Mrs. Pelly appears to be a delicate woman and does not yet seem quite at home among us.' When he sailed from York Factory in September 1825, the Governor was accompanied by Captain Pelly and his ailing wife. While it is unknown how he settled any romantic attachments he may have had in Great Britain, Pelly's unhappy example undoubtedly contributed to the fact that Simpson returned to Rupert's Land still a bachelor, apparently prepared to resume former arrangements *à la façon du pays.*

Contrary to the assertions of several authors, it is now that Margaret Taylor, the half-breed daughter of George Taylor, a former sloop master at York, appears

in the Governor's life. She was definitely not the mother of either Maria or James Keith Simpson. When Simpson first became attached to her is uncertain, but she was likely introduced to him by her brother Thomas Taylor, the Governor's personal servant during these years. As was his practice when embarking on an extensive tour, Simpson left this woman at York in the fall of 1826 under the surveillance of his friend McTavish, to whom he wrote in a jocular, if rather crude fashion:

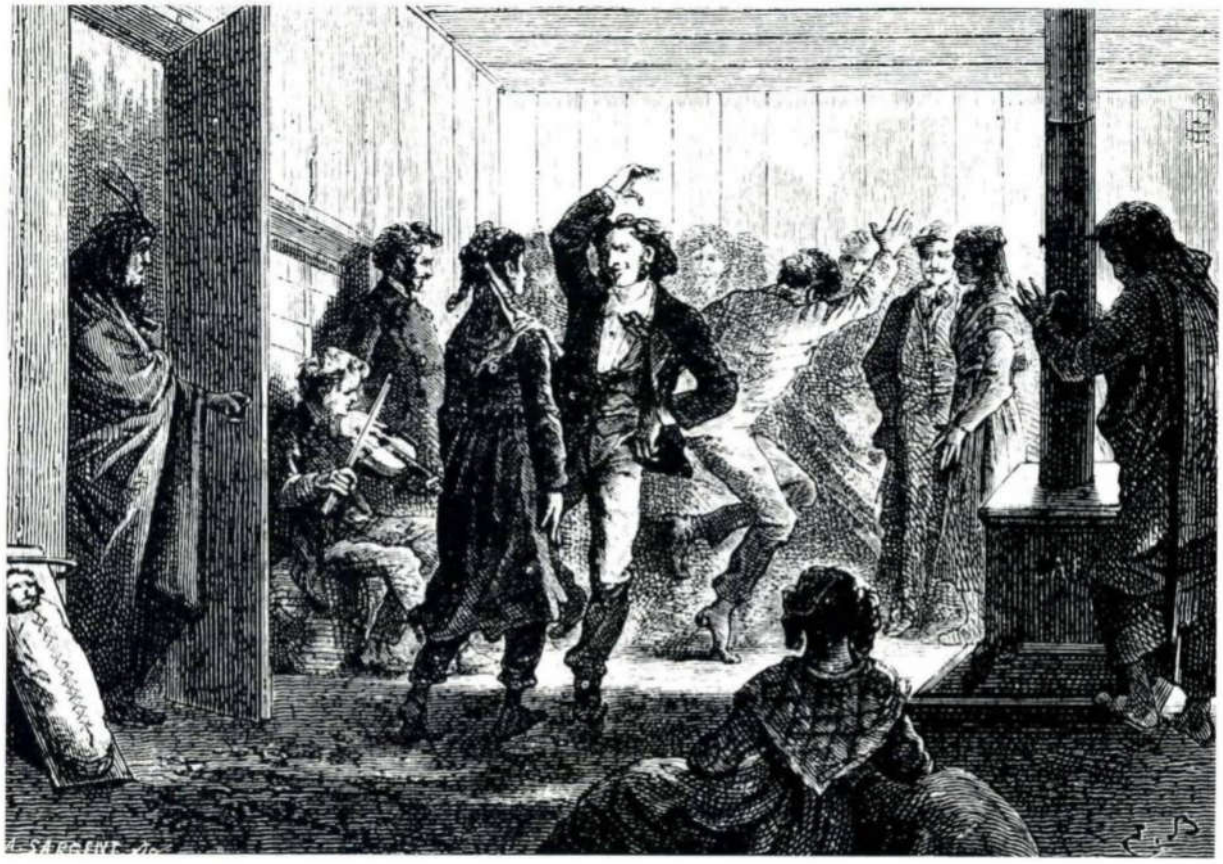
> Pray keep an Eye on the commodity and if she bring forth anything in the proper time & of the right color let them be taken care of but if any thing be amiss let the whole be bundled about their business . . .

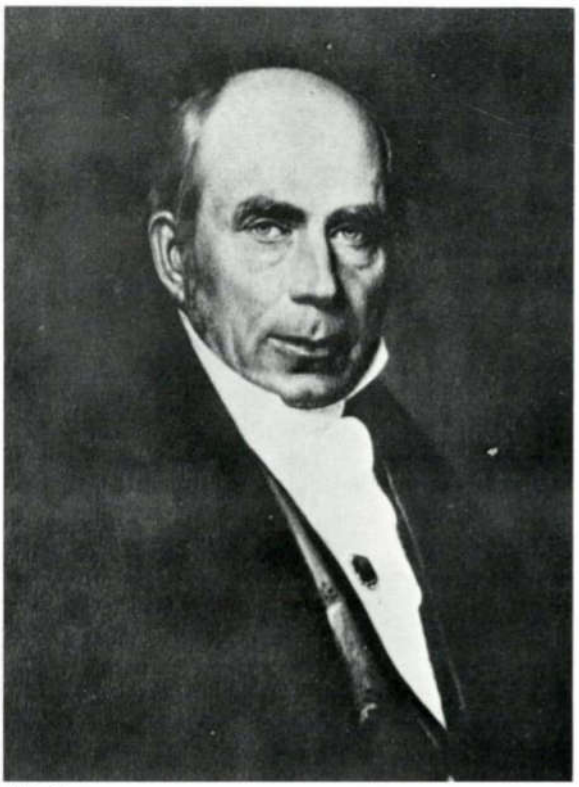
The lady does not seem to have warranted his suspicion and in the spring of 1827 a son was born, named George after his father. Simpson honoured his responsibility for the support of his family at York, allowing Margaret the enjoyment of special rations such as tea and sugar and even providing financial assistance for her widowed mother.

In his brief biography of Simpson, A. S. Morton stated that domestic concerns played no part in the Governor's life at this time, but such is not the case. Although she is never mentioned in the official journals, Simpson's private correspondence reveals that Margaret Taylor accompanied him when he left York in July 1828 on another cross-country voyage, this time to New Caledonia. At first she was so unwell that he was afraid he might have to leave her in Athabasca, but she recovered and proved herself a valued companion, for Simpson rapidly found his two associates Dr Hamlyn and Chief Trader 'Archy' McDonald rather tiresome. 'The commodity' he confided to McTavish, 'has been a great consolation to me.' By this time, Simpson himself seems to have regarded Margaret Taylor as his wife according to the custom of the country. While returning in the spring, he spoke of her affectionately as 'my fair one' and although disgruntled by the conduct of her brother Thomas, acknowledged him as a brother-in-law. Simpson, however, was now preparing for another trip to England via the Canadas. On his way east he left Margaret at Bas de la Rivière under the care of Chief Factor John Stuart, whose country wife was her sister, Mary Taylor. There, at the end of August 1829, Margaret gave birth to another boy, later christened John McKenzie Simpson.

John Stuart's letters to the Governor during his absence provide a touching picture of Simpson's country wife and her little ones. Young Geordy and his baby brother were thriving. 'I never saw finer or for their age more promising Children' claimed Stuart. His praise of

A 'Christmas ball in Bachelors' Hall', York Factory, 1843.





John Stuart.

their quiet and good-natured mother was also unstinted: '. . . in her comportment she is both decent and modest far beyond anything I could expect – or ever witnessed in any of her countrywomen.' Old Widow Taylor was living with the family at Bas de la Rivière and Stuart credited her with instilling commendable habits of cleanliness and industry in her daughters. He emphasized that Margaret was counting the days until Simpson's return:

> A little ago when at supper I was telling Geordy that in two months and ten days he would see his father. [His mother] smiled and remarked to her sister that seventy days was a long time and [she] wished it was over.

It must have been a grievous shock when the Governor returned to Rupert's Land in May 1830 – a lovely young English bride at his side! There can be little doubt that John Stuart had not the slightest intimation that Simpson intended taking a wife in England. His obsequious attempts to curry favour are much in evidence, and he unquestionably described Simpson's country family in glowing terms because he thought that was what the Governor wanted to hear.

It is extremely difficult to pinpoint the time or cause of Simpson's change of heart. In a letter dated March 1828, his cousin Æmileus Simpson advised the Governor, then contemplating retirement in Rupert's Land, that this was not likely to be a happy course of action:

> . . . rather look for some amiable companion in the civilized world with which to conclude your days in the true comforts of a domestic life.

Whatever his private feelings for Margaret Taylor, Simpson may have decided that her background and lack of education made her unsuitable for the role of 'first lady' of Rupert's Land. Furthermore, his reasoning appears to have been influenced by the experience and council of his close friend, John George McTavish, who in the winter of 1829-30 was also on furlough in Great Britain searching for a wife.

Before becoming a Chief Factor in the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, J. G. McTavish, the son of a Scottish chieftain, had had a long and distinguished career as a Nor'Wester. During his early days at Moose Factory, though in opposition, he formed a union with one of the daughters of Thomas Thomas, the governor of the English Company's establishment. It appears to have been a particularly unhappy relationship: that woman was driven to infanticide and McTavish subsequently renounced his connection with her. It should be noted that infanticide was not unknown in Indian society in times of famine or great hardship. In the case of the women of the fur traders, it was perhaps symptomatic of their fear of being abandoned for it usually occurred when the husband was on furlough.

After this unfortunate episode, McTavish took for a country wife the young Nancy McKenzie, otherwise known as Matooskie, the half-breed daughter of a prominent Nor'Wester. She was to live with him for seventeen years and bear him a lively family of six daughters of whom McTavish seems to have been very fond. In the late 1820s, there were signs of a growing estrangement between himself and their mother; McTavish confided to Simpson that he contemplated packing Nancy off to Red River where her uncle, Donald McKenzie, was now governor. Although his wife may have feared the outcome of a long separation, the fact that McTavish took their young daughter, Anne, with him when he sailed for England in September 1829 must have been reassuring.

The glimpses of the two friends' quest for a 'tender exotic' in Britain reveal that the rough and ready society of the fur trade left its gentlemen ill at ease in the intricacies of genteel courtship. Simpson wrote encouragingly to McTavish who was in Scotland:

> I see you are something like myself shy with the fair, we should not be so much so with the Browns . . . muster courage "a faint heart never won a fair Lady."

Simpson was, in fact, very ill during his sojourn in England, the years of strenuous travelling having caught up with him, but he queried jauntily 'Let me know if you have any fair cousin or acquaintance likely to suit an invalid like me . . .' McTavish had little time to offer assistance. A few weeks later Simpson wrote ecstatically 'Would you believe it? I am in Love.' The middle-aged, hard-hearted Governor had fallen completely under the spell of his eighteen-year-old cousin Frances Simpson who had been but a child when he had first started his career as a clerk in her father's firm. At first it was decided that the wedding should await Simpson's return

from America in the fall of 1830, but the prospect of such a separation prompted him to persuade her parents to give their immediate consent. The couple were united on February 24 and embarked on a short trip to Tunbridge Wells.

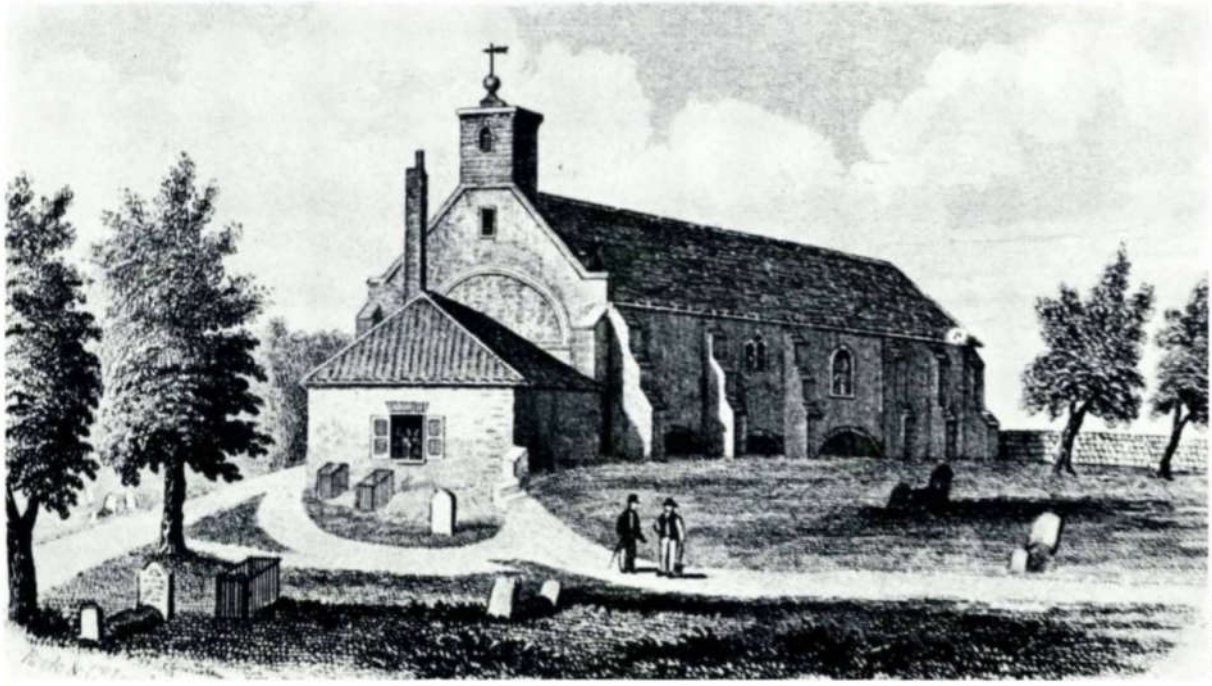
McTavish, in the meantime, had not met with such immediate success. An attempt to secure the affection of a 'Miss B.' failed, but by February, the old Nor'Wester was able to report, much to Simpson's delight, that he too was to be wed – to a Miss Catherine Turner, daughter of the late Keith Turner of Turnerhall, Aberdeenshire. They were married on 24 February in Edinburgh, their honeymoon being no more than a hasty journey to London to join the Simpsons prior to sailing for North America. Simpson who appreciated how much the ladies would value each other's company, took pains to ensure their comfort on the voyage, reserving the sole use of the ladies' cabin for their party.

Although Frances Simpson was undoubtedly a very pretty and cultivated young lady, her sheltered upbringing and delicate constitution made her an unlikely candidate for the role of Governor's lady in the inhospitable wilds of Rupert's Land. Her diary of the voyage to the Indian Country reveals that parting from the close family circle of Grove House was almost more than she could bear:

> I can scarcely trust myself to think of the pang which shot thro' my heart, on taking the last "Farewell' of my beloved Father, who was equally overcome at the first parting from any of his children – suffice it to say, that this was to me a moment of bitter sorrow . . . .

Frances Simpson.

St. Mary's church in Middlesex where the Simpsons were married.



HBC ARCHIVES

Shortly after the ship sailed from Liverpool on March 10, the young woman succumbed to a violent attack of seasickness: she was so ill that Simpson was prepared to bribe the Captain to put her ashore in Ireland, but stormy weather foiled the attempted landing. Fortunately, over the course of the voyage her health improved. The party spent several pleasant days in New York and then proceeded overland to Montreal, where the ladies divided their time between sightseeing and being entertained by fashionable society.

Before embarking at Lachine for the canoe trip to the interior, however, an incident occurred which threw the contrasting mores of fur-trade society and middle-class gentility into sharp focus. McTavish's open affection and continuing responsibility for his eldest daughters made it inevitable that his new wife would learn of their existence. In fact, his thirteen-year-old daughter Mary was at school near Montreal. One evening after dinner, the Governor's servant threw open the door and announced 'Miss Mactavish' to the assembled company:

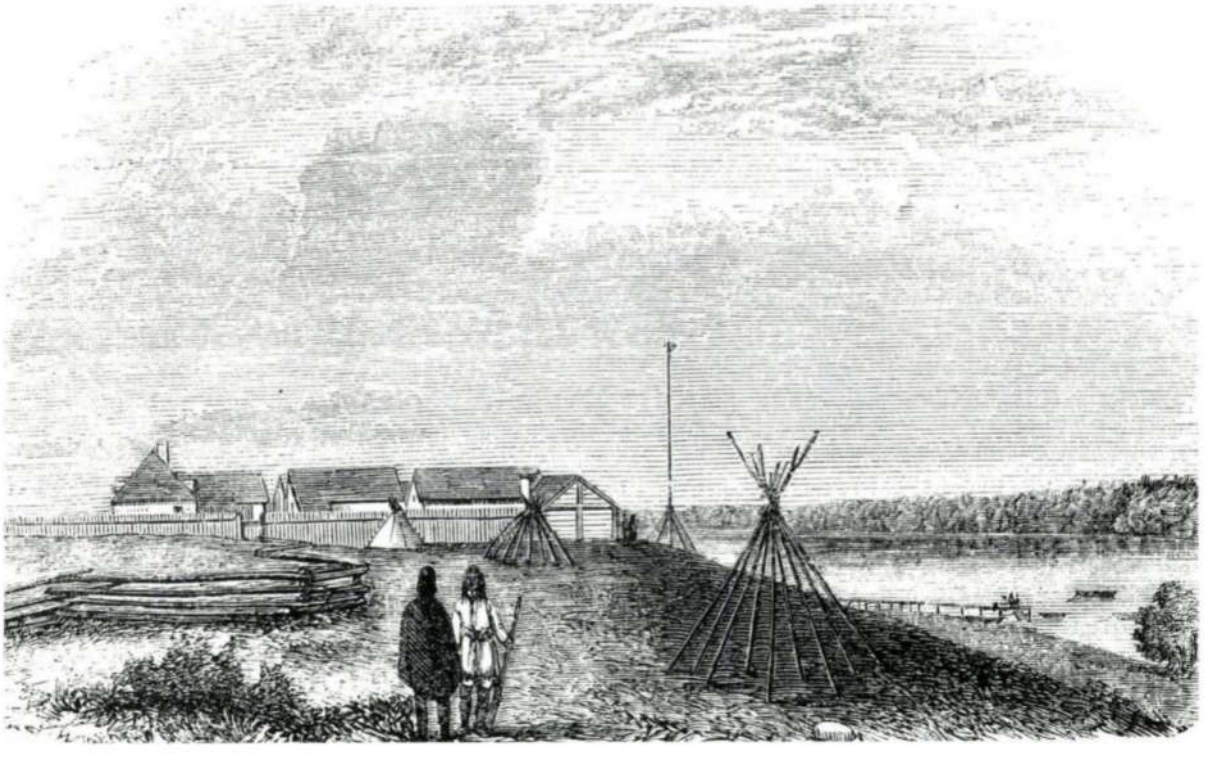
> [McTavish] rose & took her up to his wife, who got stupid, but shook hands with the Miss who was very pretty & mighty impudent . . . [Mrs McTavish] got white & red & at last rose & left the room, all the party looking very uncomfortable except [her husband] & the girl. [Mrs Simpson] followed & found her in a violent fit of crying, she said she knew the child was to have been home that night, but thought she wd. have been spared such a public introduction.

Simpson seems to have endeavoured to spare his wife similar indignities. Letitia Hargrave, recounting this episode in 1840, commented wryly that 'Mrs. Simpson evidently has no idea that she has more encumbrances than Mrs. Mactavish, altho' she did say that she was always terrified to look about her in case of seeing something disagreeable.' (This may help to explain Simpson's relative neglect of his mixed-blood children in later years. There is no evidence that they, unlike many of the children of Company officers, were ever sent overseas or to Canada to be educated, and all were excluded from Simpson's final will of 1860.)

On the long voyage into the Indian Country, the first ever for British ladies, every precaution was taken to minimize the hazards and inconveniences of canoe travel. Although Frances owned that it was not a trip 'altogether pleasing or congenial to the taste of a Stranger', her diary displays much youthful enthusiasm and good humour. She was awed by the magnificence of the scenery, professed admiration for the strength and skill of their picked crew of voyageurs, two of whom were entrusted to carry the ladies over the portages, and shook hands with several of the leading Indians, to whom she was an object of great curiosity. At Fort William, however, she was grieved at losing the companionship of the amiable Mrs McTavish, who was here branching off to her new home at Moose Factory, the headquarters of the Southern Department.

The news that the Governor had returned to Rupert's Land with a genteel English wife made a great stir, especially in the upper echelons of fur-trade society. As

Bas de la Rivière, also known as Fort Alexander, 1857.



the party progressed from post to post, the Company's officers were assiduous in their attempts to appear hospitable and refined. At Lac La Pluie [which some weeks later was named Fort Frances in honour of Mrs Simpson] while the Governor transacted business, Chief Trader Thomas McMurray undertook to play the gallant and escorted Mrs Simpson on a tour of fort and garden:

> . . . old & weather beaten as he was, he surpassed all the Gentlemen I had met with in these Wilds, as a Lady's Man; but altho' our walk did not occupy an hour, it quite exhausted all his fine speeches, and the poor man seemed as much relieved when we returned to the house . . . as if he had just been freed from an attack of the Night-Mare.

Few were more concerned to create a favourable impression than the obsequious John Stuart who welcomed Simpson's new wife to Bas de la Rivière in early June with 'no ordinary degree of kindness'. His efforts to appear the well-read gentleman were conspicuous in the rapturous way he described the Governor's lady to a prominent member of the London Committee:

> The very first sight of her on landing at Bas de la Riviere strongly reminded me of the Picture Milton has drawn of our first Mother = Grace was in all her steps = heaven in her Eye = In all her gestures Dignity and love, while everything I have seen of her since – seems to denote her such as first Lord Lyttleton represented his first Lady to have been = Polite as all her life in courts had been – Yet good as she the world had never seen.

Governor Simpson, he declared, had performed an immeasurable service in bringing this charming creature to the Indian Country, for her coming heralded an improved standard of morality and gentility.

The extent to which Stuart enthused over the virtues of Simpson's young bride is extremely suspect when one considers that this old Nor'Wester had often taken it upon himself to champion the honour of the ladies of the country, and that his own country wife was the sister of the deposed Margaret Taylor. A truer gauge of his feelings is revealed in his hostile reaction to the news that his long-time associate J. G. McTavish had also not considered his country union binding and had returned to Rupert's Land with a Scottish wife.

Indeed, the news of McTavish's marriage was greeted with astonishment throughout the Indian Country. Whatever their opinion of the Governor's action, several influential fur traders were loud in denouncing McTavish's shabby treatment of Nancy McKenzie, none more so than her uncle Donald, the Governor of Red River, though he himself had quietly 'turned off' his own country wife several years before to marry a Swiss settler's daughter. Even the young clerk, James Hargrave, who disapproved of country marriages, felt great sympathy for Matooskie when she was quietly told that McTavish was not returning to York:

> The first blow was dreadful to witness . . . but the poor girl here bears up wonderfully & is fast acquiring resignation.

McTavish's action added to his unpopularity at York and his opponents circulated rumours which may have originated with the grief-stricken Matooskie herself, charging him with gross cruelty and drunkenness.

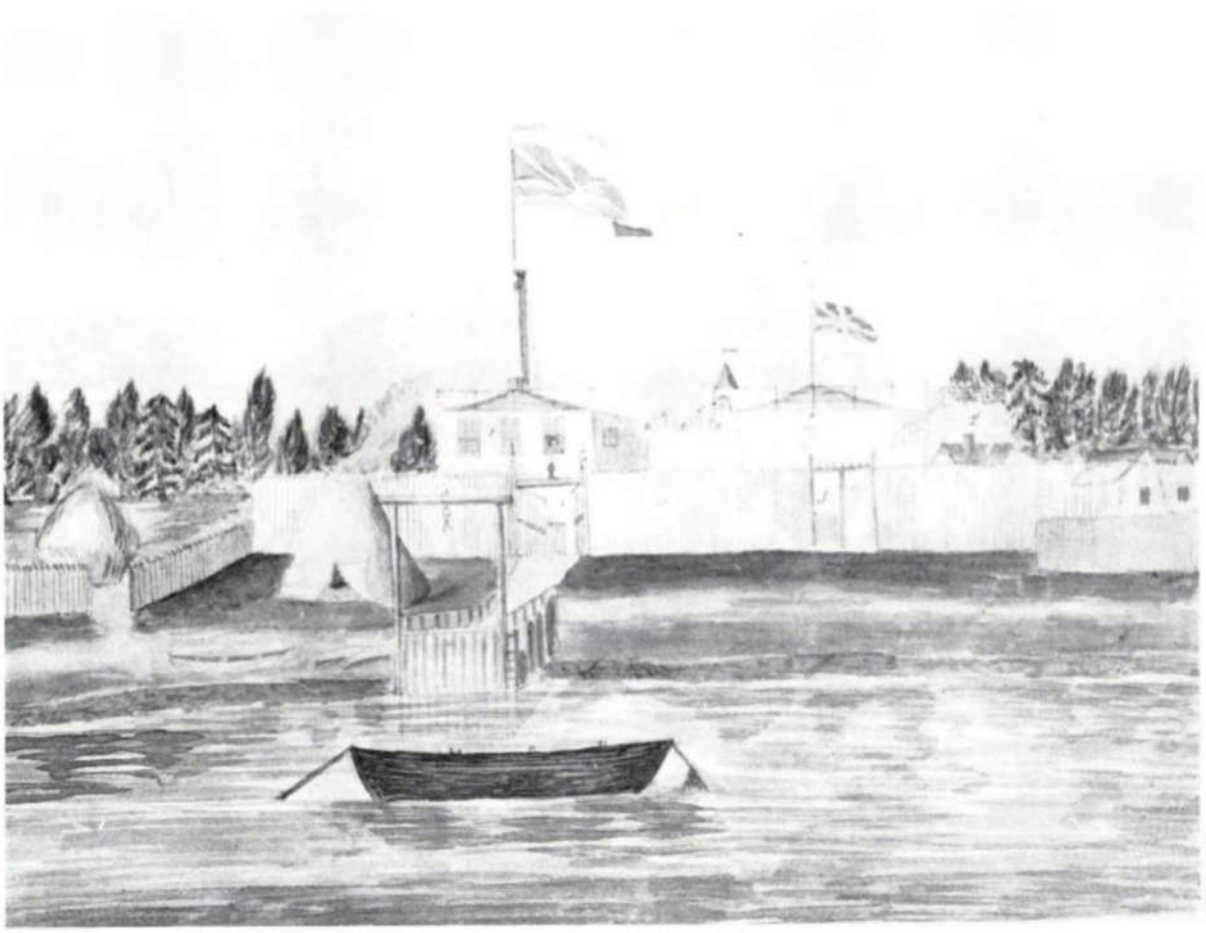
Donald McKenzie.

Simpson, however, would brook no attack on his friend's character when he arrived at York in the summer of 1830. He packed Nancy McKenzie off to Bas de la Rivière where she spent the winter under the same roof as his 'old concern' Margaret Taylor. Both women, who each had two children with them, were given an allowance of thirty pounds.

Thus John Stuart had become the temporary guardian of both cast-off wives. Much to Simpson's annoyance, the old man now deemed it a question of honour to defend the rights of the pitiable Matooskie. He bitterly attacked McTavish for having so unfeelingly violated the custom of the country:

> . . . what could be your aim in discarding her whom you . . . had for 17 Years with you. She was the Wife of your choice and has born you seven Children, now Stigmatized with ignominy . . . if with a view to domestick happiness you have thus acted, I fear the Aim has been Missed and that remorse will be your portion for life . . . I will never become your enemy, but . . . I think it is as well . . . our correspondence may cease.

McTavish, now safely isolated at Moose Factory, had delegated Simpson to settle his affairs, and the Governor found himself at 'hot war' with McKenzie and Stuart who demanded that Matooskie should at least receive a large financial settlement to compensate for the years she had devoted to McTavish. Although Simpson acknowledged the necessity of some provision for both women, he considered it both economic and honourable



HBC ARCHIVES

Moose Factory, a water-colour drawing by William Richards, a 'Native of Hudsons Bay', who was employed by the Company in the James Bay area between 1804 and 1811.

to solve the problem by finding them new husbands. Thus while McKenzie and Stuart raged, Simpson was busy negotiating. Early in January, he silenced his opponents by securing a written promise of marriage for Matooskie; one Pierre Leblanc, a respectable French-Canadian in the Company's service at Red River had finally succumbed to the offered dowry of two hundred pounds sterling. Leblanc was given a week off to go courting at Bas de la Rivière, and Matooskie, although she had declared she would never take another husband, had little alternative but to accept his offer. After Matooskie's baptism, the couple were formally married by a priest, at the Catholic Church of St Boniface early in the morning on 7 February 1831, an event which was duly celebrated by their friends at Red River. Although McTavish's country wife was now safely disposed of, he still continued to provide some financial aid for his youngest daughters who were left under her care.

The details of Simpson's own negotiations are unfortunately lacking. It is recorded, however, that on 24 March 1831 'Margarette' Taylor was married to French-Canadian Amable Hogue by the Reverend David Jones at the Red River Church. The opinion was popularly expressed that these arrangements represented quite a come-down for both ladies, particularly the latter. John Stuart, on the other hand, attempting to reinstate himself with the Governor, declared his relief at being rid of his charges. 'I am very glad that the recent marriages are over – every one of the two Couples appear perfectly happy.' Simpson, however, was not about to forgive either McKenzie or Stuart for their vexatious meddling. He now considered McKenzie, whom he had come to detest, as a most unsuitable governor for Red River, while old John Stuart, for all his pains, found himself banished to the wilds of the Mackenzie River District in the fall of 1832. The whole affair, which illustrates the influence of private matters in the close-knit society of the fur trade, did little to help the Governor and his new wife settle comfortably into life at Red River.

In the colony, Simpson endeavoured to adopt a life-style which he considered appropriate to his position as the Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Such refinements as a pianoforte and a shiny, new

carriole appeared, and construction was begun on an impressive stone house which was to be the official residence. The Governor's lady was extolled as 'the brightest star' in Red River society, but her very presence tended to reinforce class distinctions in the settlement. As one mixed-blood officer in the Company observed, '. . . things are not on the same footing as formerly.' By the spring of 1831, Simpson had become thoroughly disgusted with the 'high society' of the colony, largely as a result of the gossip and intrigue occasioned by the McTavish affair. He felt there were few women even among the European ladies in Red River with whom his wife Frances could form an intimate acquaintance. The Governor lamented to McTavish:

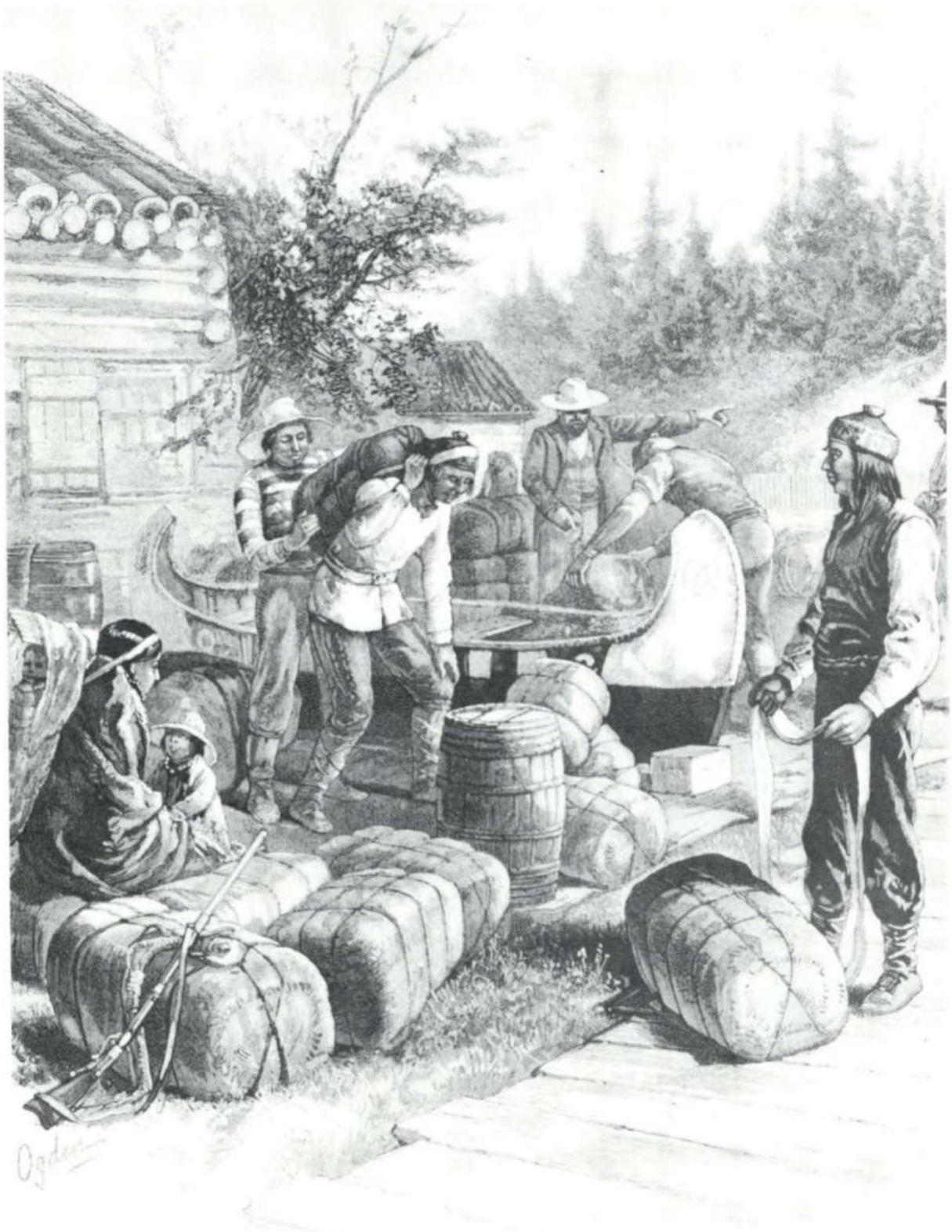
> I am most heartily tired of Red River . . . and should be delighted to join you at Moose next Fall, indeed my better half is constantly entreating me to take her there so that she may enjoy the society of her Friend . . . Here she has formed no intimacies, McKenzie's Wife is a silly ignorant thing, whose common place wise saws with which we are constantly persecuted are worse than a blister; Mrs. Jones is a good unmeaning Woman whom we merely see for half an hour occasionally & Mrs. Cockrane whose assumed puritanism but ill conceals the vixen, shines only when talking of elbow Grease & the scouring of pots & pans.

But if the European women left much to be desired, the ladies of the country were now definitely *personae non gratae*. This self-enforced exclusiveness of the Governor had unfortunate repercussions. Those Company officers who had mixed-blood wives were much insulted when Simpson indicated that their society was no longer acceptable. No one felt this slight more acutely than Chief Factor Colin Robertson, a proud Scotsman who had had a long if somewhat erratic career in the service of both companies. Robertson had earned Simpson's dislike partly because his genuine concern for the betterment of his half-breed wife Theresa Chalifoux and their family had often resulted in extravagance and a neglect of business. The old Chief Factor intended to take his country family with him when he retired from Rupert's Land, but his attempt to introduce his wife to the society of Mrs Simpson when passing through Red River met with a scathing rebuff from the Governor:

> . . . Robertson brought his bit of Brown wt. him to the Settlement this Spring in hopes that She would pick up a few English manners before visiting the civilized World . . . I told him distinctly that the thing was impossible which mortified him exceedingly.

At Moose Factory, McTavish had similarly ruffled feelings by refusing to countenance certain of the officers' wives. Even Simpson expressed concern lest McTavish go too far in alienating Chief Factor Joseph Beioley whose capacities he rated highly, although the Governor fully sympathized with his friend that it was the height of impertinence for Beioley to expect that 'his bit of circulating copper' should have the society of Mrs McTavish. The mixed-blood, though Anglicized families of former Company officers, such as that of George Gladman at Moose, were highly incensed at such treatment, for they considered themselves among the upper crust of fur-trade society. Simpson encouraged McTavish to keep these people in their place:

The Governor's House, Lower Fort Garry, c. 1880.



An officer of the Company with his Indian wife, c. 1882.

> I . . . understand that the other Ladies at Moose are violent and indignant at being kept at such a distance, likewise their husbands, the Young Gladmans particularly . . . The greater distance at which they are kept the better.

Only two half-breed women had been allowed to come within a dozen yards of Mrs Simpson, he informed McTavish, and these in a purely menial capacity. The extent to which the Governor found himself avoided caused him to muse: 'They do not even venture within gun Shot of me now – I have seen the time when they were not so shy.'

By this time, the responsibilities of married life weighed heavily on the Governor, for Frances Simpson, like Mrs Pelly before her, proved unequal to the rigours of frontier life. Despite constant medical care, her health deteriorated rapidly as her first pregnancy advanced. Simpson, who now appeared the most attentive of husbands, was distraught at the necessity of leaving her during the summer of 1831 to attend the annual council at York Factory. His speedy dispatch of Company business was not this time motivated simply by a desire for efficiency, and he hurried back to Red River in time for the birth of a son which his wife barely survived. During the winter, Simpson was much heartened by the steady, if slow progress of both mother and child, and the christening of George Geddes Simpson in January 1832 was a considerable social event in the colony. This happiness was short-lived, however, for the sudden death of the little boy a few months later plunged his parents into the depths of despair. Domestic tribulations had, in fact, brought the Governor to the low point of his career: his own health was breaking down, he confessed himself little interested in business, detested most of his associates, and was only prevented from retiring from the fur trade by the loss of a large sum of money. His vision of a comfortable family life in Red River now shattered, Simpson had to accept that his wife, who was desperately in need of skilled medical attention, could no longer remain in Rupert's Land:

> She has no Society, no Friend, no Relative here but myself, she cannot move wt. me on my different Journeys and I cannot leave her in the hands of Strangers . . . some of them very unfeeling. . .

He, therefore, took Frances home via Canada in the summer of 1833, and she never returned to the Indian Country. Simpson's subsequent efforts to divide his time between his family in England and the superintendence of the fur trade in Western Canada tended to hamper his effectiveness as Governor.

Perhaps it was Catherine McTavish's Scottish constitution which enabled her to withstand the harsh climate of Hudson Bay because she appears to have adapted with less difficulty to life at Moose Factory. A kind, sensible woman, 'tho' not handsome', she reconciled herself to McTavish's former arrangements. She presented the old fur trader with two more little girls and for a time had the care of four of her step-daughters. McTavish himself was suffering badly from gout, and Simpson, ever solicitous of his friend's welfare, sought a more amenable situation for the family. Thus in 1835, McTavish moved to the Lake of Two Mountains, on the Ottawa River where he had invested in a farm. The Governor declared it the ideal solution:

> Here your Family could be reared and Educated cheaply while Mrs. McTavish & yourself could enjoy the comforts of civilized society in a moderate degree as the country is becoming closely settled all about you, a Steam Vessel plies regularly to your Door & there is a Church within 3 or 4 Miles of it.

Although neither Mrs Simpson nor Mrs McTavish remained for long in the Indian Country, their coming contributed to the decline in the position of native women in fur-trade society. The implication was apparent that in more established areas, particularly at Red River, a country wife was no longer acceptable. In considering possible successors to McKenzie for the governorship of the colony, Simpson initially discounted the highly competent Alexander Christie because he had an Indian family *à la façon du pays.*

It now became fashionable for a Company officer to have a European wife. As Hargrave unfeelingly observed, 'this influx of white faces has cast a still deeper shade over the faces of our Brunettes in the eyes of many.' When Chief Factor James McMillan brought his Scottish wife out to Red River in the fall of 1831, one old fur trader, commenting on this 'novelty of getting H Bay stocked with European Ladys', conjectured that several others would avail themselves of their furlough 'with no other view than that of getting Spliced to some fair Belinda & return with her' to the Indian Country. Even some of those who had strongly professed a sense of duty to their country wives succumbed. Simpson commented wryly on Chief Factor William Connolly's marriage to his wealthy cousin in Montreal in 1832:

> You would have heard of Connolly's Marriage – he was one of those who considered it a most unnatural proceeding "to desert the Mother of his children" and marry another; this is all very fine, very sentimental and very kind-hearted 3000 miles from the Civilized World but is lost sight of even by Friend Connolly where a proper opportunity offers.

The coming of white women to the Indian Country brought into disrepute indigenous social customs of the fur trade. Marriage *à la façon du pays* was no longer acceptable, especially with the presence of missionaries intolerant of any deviation. The presence of white women underlined the cultural shortcomings of mixed-blood wives, particularly in more settled areas where their native skills were no longer required. Unfortunately, European ladies themselves, by zealously guarding what they considered to be their intrinsically superior status, actively fostered an increasing stratification of fur-trade society. The arrival of white women symbolized the coming of a new era. The old fur-trade order was gradually giving way to agrarian settlement which was unquestioningly equated with civilization. ◆

PERMAFROST

BY ROBERT F. LEGGET

Dr. Legget, retired Director of the Division of Building Research, National Research Council of Canada, is author of numerous publications, including the book 'Rideau Waterway'.

THE UPSURGE OF PUBLIC INTEREST in northern regions in recent years has brought the name 'permafrost' into the market place. The proposed construction of pipelines for gas and oil from the Arctic Coast to southern Canada is now generally known to be complicated by the existence of permafrost along considerable parts of the routes that may be followed. The expenditure of over $20,000,000 by groups of oil, gas and pipeline companies on test installations and other research work in the North, all in connection with the problem of building on permafrost, shows clearly the economic significance of this unusual northern problem.

As is so often the case when a little-known natural phenomenon comes up for public discussion, a great deal of uninformed comment has found its way into the public press, and even into journals and books where one might expect greater accuracy. Comments range all the way from the suggestion of a biologist that Canadians know nothing about permafrost and have done no real research into its problems to the suggestion of an inexperienced construction superintendent that Canadians have got to learn how to use this 'new material' as good stuff for road building.

Is permafrost, then, something that is entirely new, something that the early travellers and sojourners in the North never experienced? A glance back at some of the records made by servants of the Hudson's Bay Company quickly dispels any such impression, even though they did not use the modern name – a word coined by Dr Siemon Muller in an early U.S. military publication of the Second World War. One can dip into early records almost at random and come across such accounts as that of Joseph Robson. In his *Account of Six Years Residence in Hudson's-Bay from 1733 to 1736 and 1744 to 1747* published in 1752, he says that 'the garden-ground at York-fort and Churchill-river thawed much sooner and deeper in the space of one month, than the waste that lies contiguous to it . . . By the heat therefore which the earth here would acquire from a general and careful cultivation, the frost might be so soon overcome, that the people might expect regular returns of seed-time and harvest.' Modern gardeners in the North have found for themselves the accuracy of this observation but, somewhat naturally, Robson's explanation of the existence of the perennial frost that he encountered was rather fanciful.

James Isham was a more percipient resident of the North. His writings *Isham's Observations & Notes 1743-49* (Volume 12, Hudson's Bay Record Society) contain comments of unusual interest. 'The shortness of the summer's is not Suffitient to thaw the Ice the severity of the winter occation's therefore itt geathers more and more Every year, for which Reason the frost is never out of the ground, in these parts, for in Dig'ing three or four foot downe in the ground in the mids't of the summr. you shall find hard froze'n Ice, which Ice may be ab't two foot thick, then come to soft ground again, for a small Depth and above six or Eight foot Downe itt's all hard Ice, – in Summer it's with much Difficulty you may Dig so Low down.' Apart from the somewhat unusual spelling and punctuation this could well be a modern account of a first experience with permafrost in the North.

The main disturbance of this frozen ground that it was necessary for early northern visitors to make was in attempting to give Christian burial to those who died in the North. This matter also received attention from Isham who records that 'these men are so froze, or any one that Dyes and are Burried 6 Foot under the surface of the ground, continues hard froze for many Year's, and Believe never will be thaw'd unless taken up, – by the Experience of frozen ground & c.'

If only as a reminder that this condition of deeply frozen ground is a phenomenon encountered in the far South just as in the far North, it may be noted that Charles Darwin records in *The Voyage of the Beagle* that 'Lieut. Kendall found the body of a foreign sailor which had long been buried, with the flesh and all the features perfectly preserved.' This was in the South Shetland Islands in 1830. Darwin's scientific eminence is well known so that it is not surprising to find him explaining that 'on the two great continents in the northern hemisphere . . . we have the zone of perpetually frozen under-soil in a low latitude – namely, in 56° in North America at the depth of three feet. . . .' And he had a good general idea as to the cause of this phenomenon.

So also did some of the more scientifically minded travellers in the Canadian North of the same period. Sir John Richardson, who first saw the North as the surgeon and naturalist attached to the Franklin expedition of 1819-22 and thereafter came to know northern Canada so well through his own expeditions, not only observed permafrost, and wrote about it, but published what is probably the first paper (certainly in English) dealing specifically with this one subject. This was a note published in the Journal of the Royal Geographical

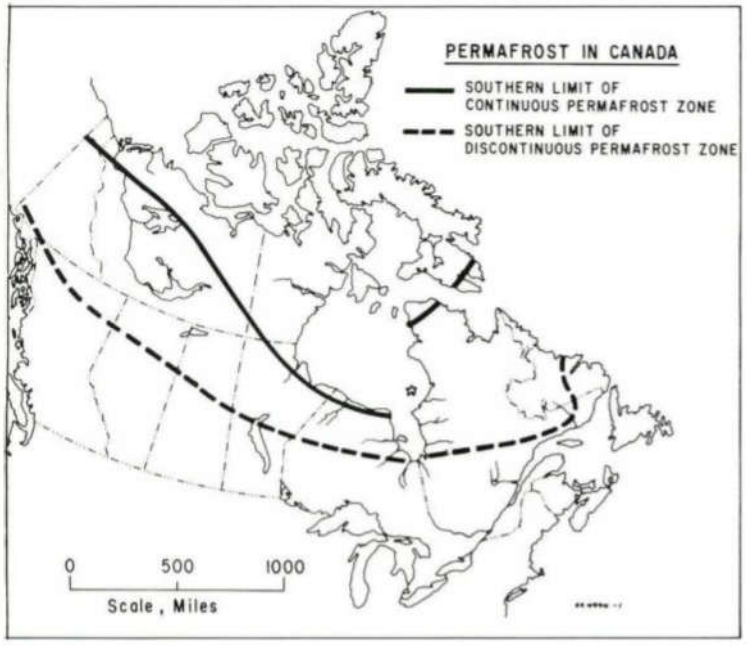
Buildings at Dawson City that have settled due to the thawing of frozen soil.

DBR/NRC

The Inuvik runway, here being built on hand-cut brush and layers of crushed rock, is still in excellent condition after ten years of use.

Wooden piles were placed in steaming holes, then frozen in to serve as a building foundation at Inuvik.

DBR/NRC



Society in 1839 suggesting 'a few observations which it is Desirable to Make on the Frozen Soil of British North America'. This was an early call for the research that is at last being prosecuted, now with vigour. In his famous book of 1852, he notes: 'Another phenomenon intimately connected with the mean temperature of a district is the "ground ice" or "permanently frozen subsoil". The lateral extent of this substratum, its southern limits, and its thickness, are interesting subjects of inquiry.'

Some attention was paid to Sir John Richardson's suggestions. In the later years of the last century, the Royal Geographical Society had an active Committee on the 'Depth of Permanently Frozen Soil in the Polar Regions, its Geographical Limits, and Relations to the Present Poles of Greatest Cold'. It is significant that General Sir G. H. Lefroy, known for his own scientific work in northern Canada, was the Chairman. In his Committee Report for 1889, he presented observations on permafrost for twenty-two locations, most of them in Canada, accompanied by some pointed comments that make useful reading even today. The observations were simple in character but the fact that they were made and analysed over eighty years ago should set at rest completely all suggestions that permafrost is 'something recently discovered by the Russians', an opinion once voiced in the hearing of the writer.

It was natural, even though scientifically unfortunate, that 'soil' is mentioned as the frozen earth-material in most of these early accounts. It would be in frozen soil that the condition would be observed. But the fact that *permafrost is a condition of the ground* and not a particular material, was clearly appreciated by Sir John Richardson, as his own words make clear. If the ground consists of solid rock, it will require sensitive thermometers inserted in the rock in order to show that it, too, is frozen in regions of permafrost. Dry sand and gravel, of which there are appreciable quantities in the North, may be in the condition of permafrost but if dry will not normally show this; accurate temperature measurements again are necessary to reveal their frozen condition. If, however, the ground consists of water-bearing soils, usually very fine-grained soils such as clay or silt, then the perennially frozen condition of the ground will be immediately apparent, for the water will be ice.

It is the average annual air temperature throughout the whole year that provides the key to the understanding of permafrost. For every location, this figure will give the long-term value of the mean air temperature for that location, and so also the mean temperature of the ground. The temperature of the upper few feet of the ground will naturally vary throughout the year, and the top few inches throughout every day, but there will be some depth at which such diurnal and annual variations have disappeared and below which the temperature of the ground will be sensibly constant. For northern parts of Canada, this depth of constant ground temperature is between 50 and 75 feet. This constant ground temperature is known to be very close to the local mean annual air temperature. For Ottawa this is 42.0° F; for Winnipeg, 36.5° F; for Thompson, Manitoba, 25.0° F; and for Inuvik, 14.7° F. The value drops, quite naturally, as one goes north. All across Canada, therefore, there is an imaginary line at which the mean annual air temperature is exactly 32° F. South of this line, the mean temperature increases; north of it, freezing intensity increases. In very rough terms, this line can be thought of as the southern limit of permafrost; actually, the boundary is closer to the 30° F isotherm, but the general relation will be clear.

The actual situation is somewhat more complex, although in principle the overall picture is correct. Surface conditions, groundwater conditions, land slope and vegetal cover are but some of the factors that influence the actual location of the southern permafrost boundary. These, and allied natural factors, also make the condition of permafrost irregular in the vicinity of the southern boundary. There are, therefore, two limits – the southern boundary of discontinuous permafrost, and the boundary north of which the permafrost condition is continuous. These important lines are shown on the accompanying map. This is based on the *Permafrost Map of Canada*, a publication of the Division of Building Research of the National Research Council jointly with the Geological Survey of Canada. The map summarizes the results of twelve summers of field work on the part of Dr R. J. E. Brown, one of the pioneers of Canadian permafrost research with G. H. Johnston and the late J. A. Pihlainen, all of the National Research Council.

R. J. E. BROWN

Massive ground polygons that indicate permafrost in water-bearing soils beneath the muskeg.

A glance at this map will suggest the validity of the fact that almost one-half of the total land area of Canada is underlain by permafrost. The same ratio holds true also for the Soviet Union, this vast extent of perennially frozen ground being one of the common features of these two countries. There are smaller areas of permafrost in other parts of the world, notably in Alaska, Greenland, Mongolia, and Manchuria: most of Antarctica is naturally underlain by permafrost; but the total for the world probably does not exceed twenty per cent of its land area, other than that which is covered by ice. Permafrost, therefore, brings special problems to Canada in the development of its northern regions; these are being well met. They have been admirably reviewed in one of the volumes of the Canadian Building Series published by the University of Toronto Press. Entitled *Permafrost in Canada*, this 234-page book is a comprehensive review by Dr Roger Brown which can be commended to all who wish to know more about this problem of the Canadian North.

For as long as the North was in isolation, peopled only by its own native Eskimo and Indian populations, a few white traders, fur trappers and policemen, permafrost created few problems. Residences were simple structures built on rock or on wooden sills if rock was not available. Any signs of settlement that they may have exhibited were easily dealt with by shimming up the timber supports. Roads were virtually non-existent, travel being by water or over winter ice and snow. It was only with the advent of technological development that permafrost made itself evident and especially so when the ground consisted of water-bearing soil. Mining in the Yukon was probably the first major activity that was affected by this special natural phenomenon of the North. Permafrost is not generally thought of in connection with the Klondike gold rush but it proved to be a vital factor in mining operations, as Pierre Berton makes clear in his vivid writings on those days. Frozen gravel banks had to be thawed. Steam was used. Berton writes of eerie scenes as this early battle with permafrost was waged in the relentless search for gold.

As mining methods became more refined, other ways of dealing with the frozen sands and gravels of the Yukon were developed. Perhaps the most notable of these was the sluicing of exposed sand and gravel with large volumes of cold water, the water gradually thawing the ground and so making possible the placer mining with large dredges that distinguished the later stages of Yukon gold mining. When precious metal mines were opened up elsewhere, using underground workings as in

the Mackenzie Valley, permafrost made itself evident as work proceeded below the surface. The major problems were encountered in shaft sinking and in founding mine structures at the surface. More pioneer work was done on this phase of northern building, notably by Alex Hemstock with the first installations at the small Imperial Oil refinery at Norman Wells. (Appropriately, this location was selected as the site of Canada's first Northern Research Laboratory, established in 1952, initially using discarded buildings from the Canol project; its principal objective was research into problems presented by permafrost.)

Wartime developments provided great stimulus to permafrost research as they did to so many other features of northern development, accepted today as commonplace. The Canol project was a leading feature but the construction of the Alaska Highway, the building of the airports on the Northwest Staging Route and the establishment of the joint weather stations at the end of the war years all played their part in showing how much had still to be learned about building in the North when the ground was water-bearing soil, and when the muskeg cover above this had been removed. Because almost all the practical problems with permafrost are encountered with these particular ground conditions, it has been only natural that the name 'permafrost' should have become popularly associated with frozen clay or silt, but the fact that the name truly describes a condition of all ground is basic and should not be forgotten.

The reason for the relatively recent interest in permafrost will now be clear. As long as man's activities in the North involved no disturbance of the natural ground cover, the fact that the ground was perennially frozen was of little consequence. Early buildings were usually mounted on simple wooden sills above the ground. Basements were unheard of until the Hudson's Bay Company decided, in 1940, to provide improved living accommodation for their northern staff. A new type of house was designed, complete with a basement that had walls of plank, a concrete floor and a modern furnace, the first example being built in the old town of Yellowknife just before the start of the Second World War. All went well, to the delight of the occupants, until the first winter heating season was well advanced. Signs of settlement were then noted, first near the front door, and eventually all around the building. By the coming of spring, the whole structure had settled so much, due to the thawing of the frozen soil beneath, that drastic steps had to be taken to counter this unexpected development. Eventually, the basement had to be filled in after removal of the furnace, and more thinking done about house design in the North.

Today in permafrost areas, Company houses are built above a gravel pad; concrete posts beneath the dwelling allow the air to circulate between the building and the ground. The hot air furnace is installed in a 'crawl space' beneath the floor of the house.

Company house built with a basement at Yellowknife, 1940.

The evapo-transpiration research observation station at Norman Wells.

R. F. LEGGET

An area near Uranium City where muskeg was stripped from the frozen silt.

Cases of settlement worse than the Yellowknife house developed with some of the early wartime structures. A large hangar building at one of the northern airports settled a matter of feet on its southern side due to the absorption of solar radiation on this side of the large structure; the northern side remained stable. It can therefore readily be seen why research into the problems of permafrost received its initial encouragement from such wartime experiences. When the ground consisted of frozen water-bearing soil the basic problem was that thawing would release, as water, the ice that had existed in the soil as lenses or even small blocks. This would be far in excess of the amount of water needed to make the particular soil moist (or far in excess of its 'liquid limit' to use the technical term of engineering).

The cover of muskeg, almost invariably found as the surface material overlying such soils, acts as an almost perfect insulator during the few short weeks of hot summer weather. Mainly because of its own very high water content, the muskeg prevents the warming effect of the continuous sunshine from penetrating more than a foot or 18 inches into the ground. This shallow upper layer that does thaw out each summer is known as the 'active layer'. It is an invariable natural phenomenon in high summer as all who have tried to traverse 'muskeg country' in July or August know. With the coming of the frost again, it will freeze and remain frozen until the following short summer season. If, however, the surface is disturbed by man's activities, such as by the driving of a tracked vehicle over it, then the delicate balance of the melt water and soil material will be destroyed. The water will accumulate in pools and will not freeze again in the location it occupied before disturbance. All northerners know well the apparently permanent harm that can be done to a uniform muskeg cover by the passage of just one tracked vehicle over it in high summer.

When more serious disturbance of the muskeg takes place, then the effects can be serious indeed, the previously 'solid soil' turning quickly in summer to the consistency of pea soup. It will, in many places, actually flow away as a liquid if the local surface gradient encourages this. In any case it will need many summers, even if left in place, to come again to a solid consistency in summer months. Those who know the short road

between Uranium City and its small port of Bushel may have noticed a strange-looking clearing to the north of the road at about its mid-point. This is the final stage of such an area of frozen silt, the surface of which was unfortunately cleared of muskeg in a misguided but honest effort to speed up the construction of the original road. It was several years before this cleared surface was firm enough even to walk upon during July and August. At that time, it also exhibited in minor degree the most serious aspect of all, the existence of what is called 'ground ice'.

As in many phases of technology, as distinct from science, this terminology is not precise since all frozen water in soil, even the thin lenses of ice normally encountered in northern soils, is really 'ground ice'. The term is popularly used, however, to describe massive accumulations of pure ice beneath the surface of the ground. These attain their most dramatic form in the ice cores of the pingos that distinguish the northeastern part of the Mackenzie Delta. A depth of as much as 80 feet of clear ice has been revealed by drilling in Baffin Island. More usually, however, these masses of ground ice are large blocks, the smallest of the size to be expected in large boulders. If they are near the surface, and if surface cover is disturbed, massive thawing will occur with consequent serious slumping of the surface. A number of depressions caused in this way were to be seen when the large gravel pit at Inuvik was first opened up. Ground ice is of great scientific interest and importance. It has attracted the attention of a number of scientists notably, in Canada, of Dr J. Ross Mackay of the University of British Columbia who has spent more than twenty summers, generally in the Mackenzie Delta, studying this aspect of northern terrain. His reports are splendid examples of northern scientific literature.

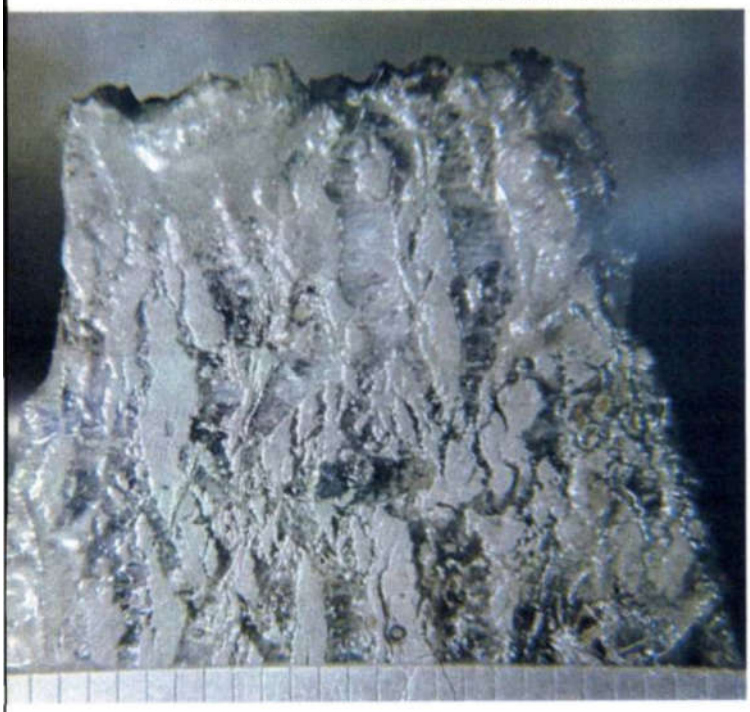
R. J. E. BROWN

The 'Big Pingo', 130 feet high, near Tuktoyaktuk.

R. F. LEGGET

'Growing rocks', near Churchill, Manitoba.

Part of a core of ice-bearing soil taken from the ground at Aklavik and cut to show alternating layers of soil and ice.



J. A. PIHLAINEN

Building in northern Canada in recent years has shown clearly, and fortunately with few exceptions, that there is now available the necessary knowledge for sound building practice despite all the problems presented by perennially frozen water-bearing soil. Basic is the concept of *not disturbing the permafrost.* In road and airfield construction, the muskeg is left untouched, being covered if possible with layers of brushwood before having placed upon it the necessary depth of dry gravel or crushed rock to provide adequate bearing and to insulate the underlying ground from any possible influence of solar radiation. The airport at Inuvik is a fine example, the depth of crushed rock calculated in advance and sensitive temperature instruments embedded in the fill to enable its performance to be watched.

Correspondingly, the heat generated in buildings must be prevented from getting into the ground. This can be

R. F. LEGGET

The beginning of a pingo formation: the area thaws in summer providing a water supply for the formation of the solid ice.

done either by placing them on substantial depths of gravel or rock carefully placed on undisturbed muskeg, or by building them above the ground, supported on wooden (or concrete) piles. These provide space beneath the floors for the circulation of air while serving as a barrier against the flow of any heat from the building structure to the ground. The modern town of Inuvik demonstrates both these methods of construction. A recent careful inspection of all the buildings in the town, ten years after its dedication, shows how well these simple precautions in design have performed. There are still, of course, many problems associated with permafrost yet to be solved but the very practical one – of being able to build upon it structures for the use and convenience of northern citizens – has been solved.

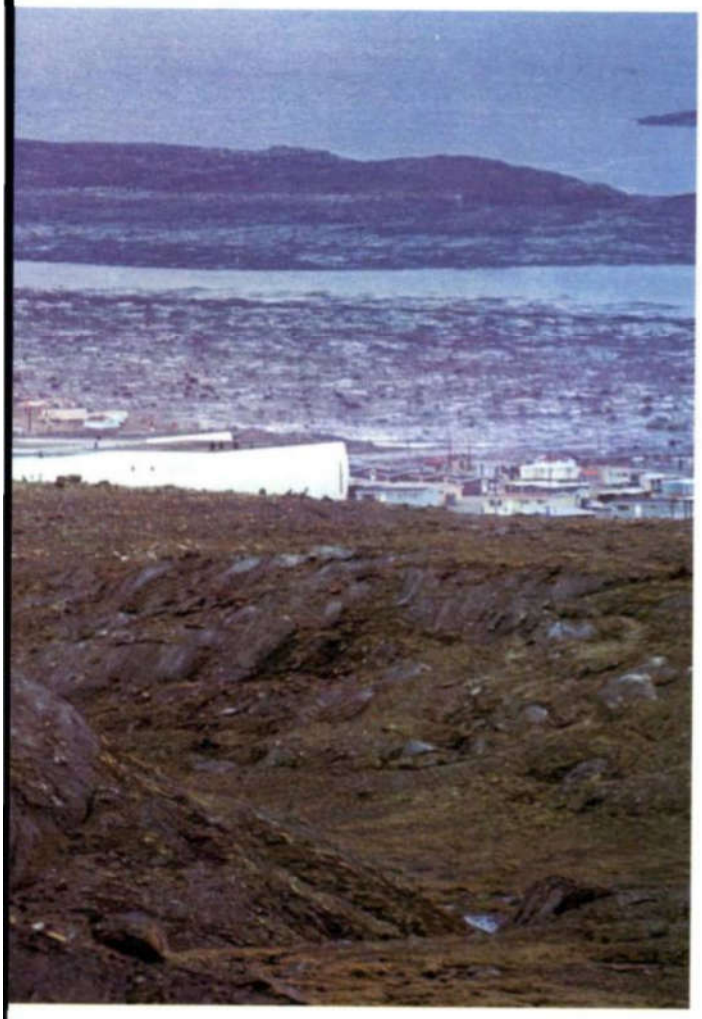
Among the many visitors to Inuvik have been two of the foremost Soviet experts in permafrost, Professors Mel'nikov and Vyalov. They were interested but at Inuvik they saw little different from northern construction in their own country, apart from the wide use of wood for building instead of concrete, and the generally more elaborate type of utilidor for conveying essential house services above ground. Naturally, they noticed the very small population in the Canadian North in comparison with their own northern regions. Their visit was a reciprocal one, Messrs Johnston and Brown of the National Research Council having previously spent two months in Russia (most of the time in Siberia) examining all phases of Soviet northern construction and permafrost research. These initial exchanges have now been followed by more formal visits of Canadian and Soviet officials to the northern parts of both countries. These contacts are all part of long-established and friendly liaison between engineers and scientists of these two largest countries of the world, sharing their knowledge and experience of northern problems, and especially the problem of permafrost. The problems are the same; in all essentials, the solutions devised are the same. The differences between northern development in the two countries that so quickly attract the attention of uninformed visitors to Russia are due entirely to the extensive mining for diamonds, gold, other metals, and coal that, so happily for the Soviets, distinguishes northern Siberia. If ever comparable economic developments are called for in northern Canada – as well they may be for gas and oil production – Canadians may be sure that their own northern building, based upon this international appreciation of the problems of permafrost, will be in keeping with the high standard of construction in the South. ◆

FROBISHER BAY

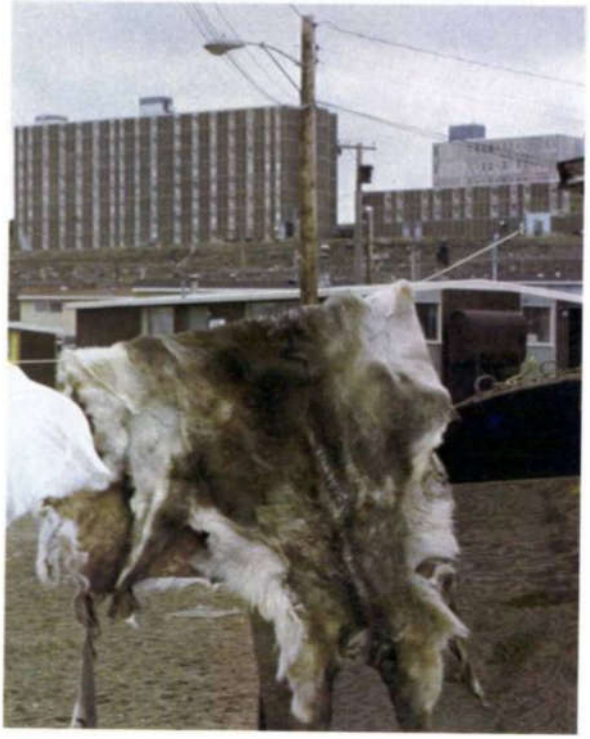
Within the memory of one generation the Hamlet of Frobisher Bay (population 2,100) on south Baffin Island has developed from a sealing and fishing area frequented by probably forty Eskimo hunters and their families to a settlement that accommodates the largest concentration of Eskimo people in the Canadian Arctic.

In 1942 during World War II, the site at the head of the Bay that runs 120 miles northwest off Hudson Strait was selected as the location of an air field in a chain of northern stations linking North America to the battlefields of Europe. The air base and its facilities,

Photographs by Henry Kalen



The Astro Hill Complex overlooking Frobisher Bay. At the left is the W. G. Brown Office Building and at centre (and below from Ikaluit with a caribou skin in the foreground) the eight-storey apartment block.

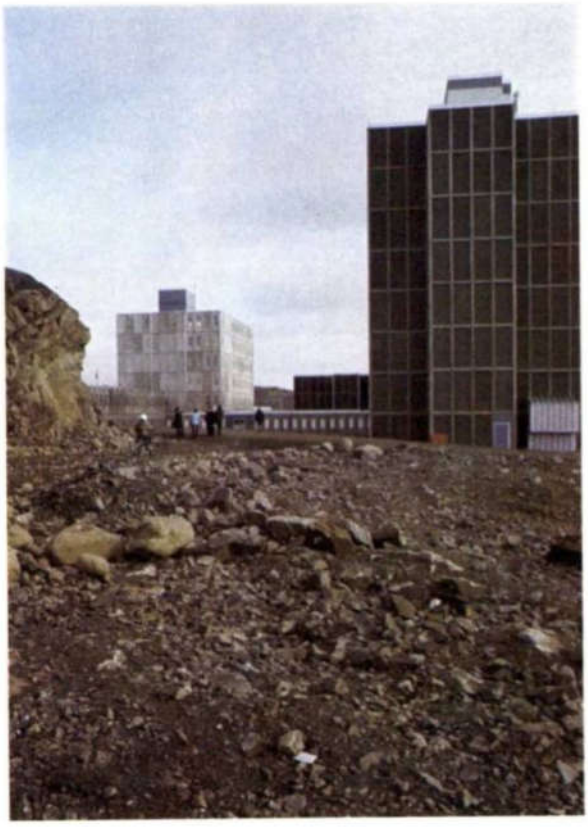


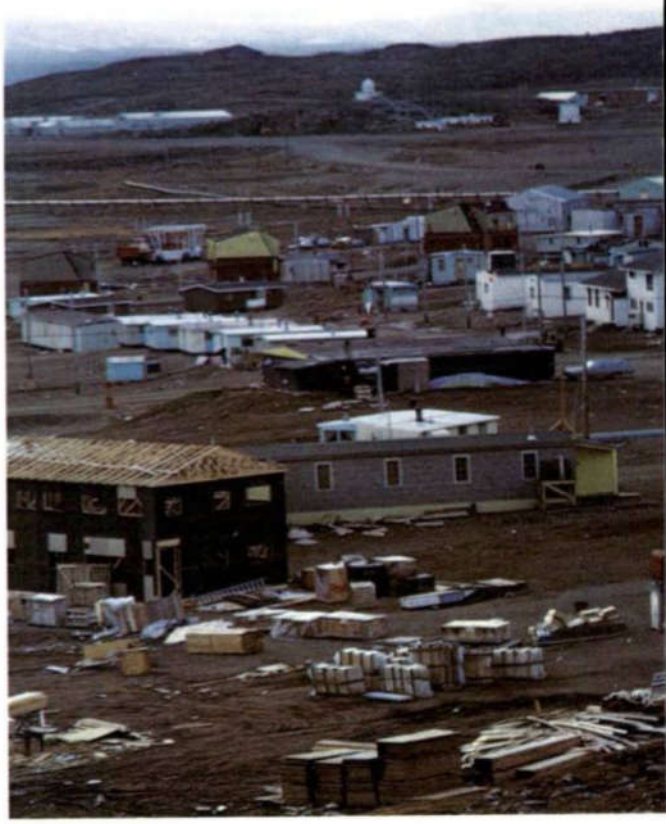
completed by the United States Air Force in 1943, tended to stabilize the Eskimo population. Families began to settle in tents and makeshift shelters along the waterfront south of the base and the area became known as Ikaluit. Some federal housing was provided, but the philosophy of the day was to keep the military establishment apart from the northern people. A settlement was planned for Apex Hill two and a half miles southeast of the base and in 1955 a school for Eskimo children was built there. The Hudson's Bay Company which had been trading with the Eskimos in various locations along the bay since 1914, moved to Apex Hill in 1949.

Consideration was then given to developing Frobisher into the federal centre in the Eastern Arctic for administration, communications, transportation and education. A study was made and in 1960 consultants recommended that the top of Astro Hill be removed and a permanent town centre of interconnected high-rise buildings be constructed on the solid rock foundation. From this modern town would emerge, planners predicted, a new breed of northerner 'young, well-informed, educated and town-oriented'.

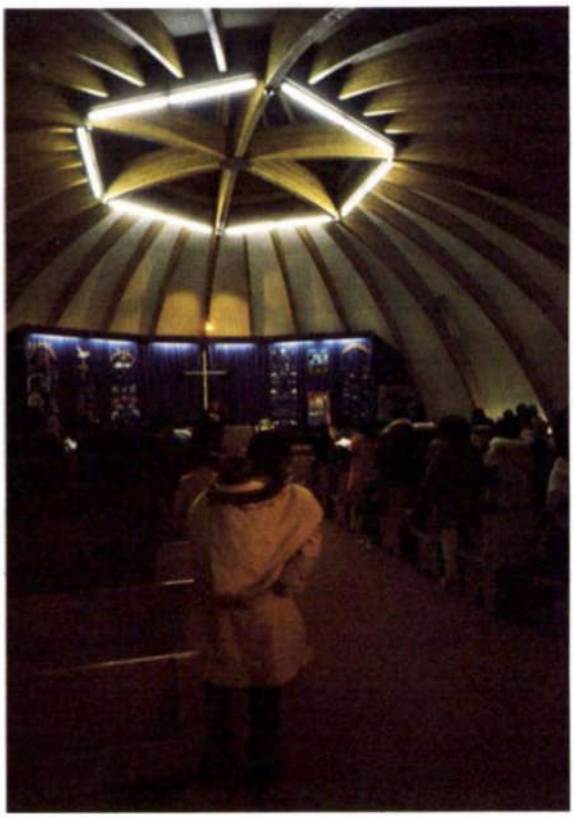
The heart of the 'new' Frobisher Bay is an adaptation of the original proposal. It is a complex of buildings that combines office and living accommodation, department and food stores, boutiques, hotel, and recreation facilities. All are accessible to each other by covered mall so that it is possible to walk day after day from private apartment to office, to store, to swimming pool without encountering the winds and sub-zero temperatures of the Arctic scene outside. Those residents who prefer row housing to apartment life have the shelter of a covered walkway from the mall to the nearby housing development.

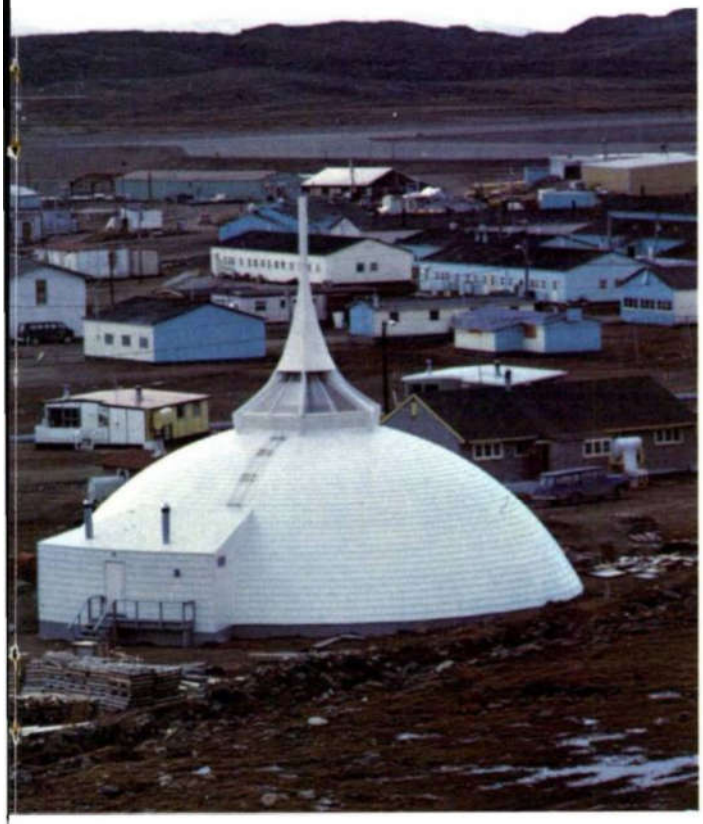
The majority of Eskimo people in Frobisher are Anglican and attend St Jude's Anglican Cathedral. Archdeacon Donald Whitbread who is priest-in-charge, speaks Eskimo and has twenty-two years of service among the northern people. With him one morning this September, was the Reverend Maurice Flint, a





The Reverend Maurice Flint, former missionary at Pond Inlet, with members of the congregation at St Jude's Anglican Cathedral.





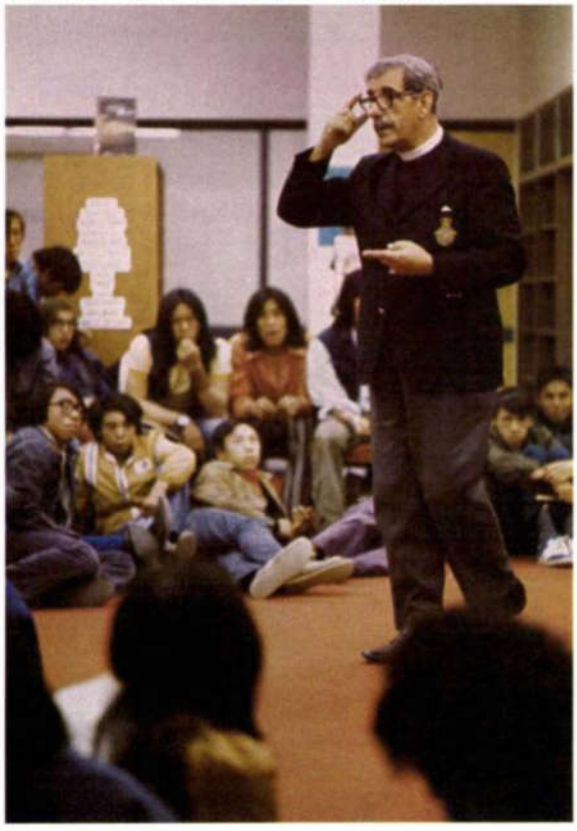
St Jude's Anglican Cathedral in Ikaluit, left, and above, Archdeacon Donald Whitbread.

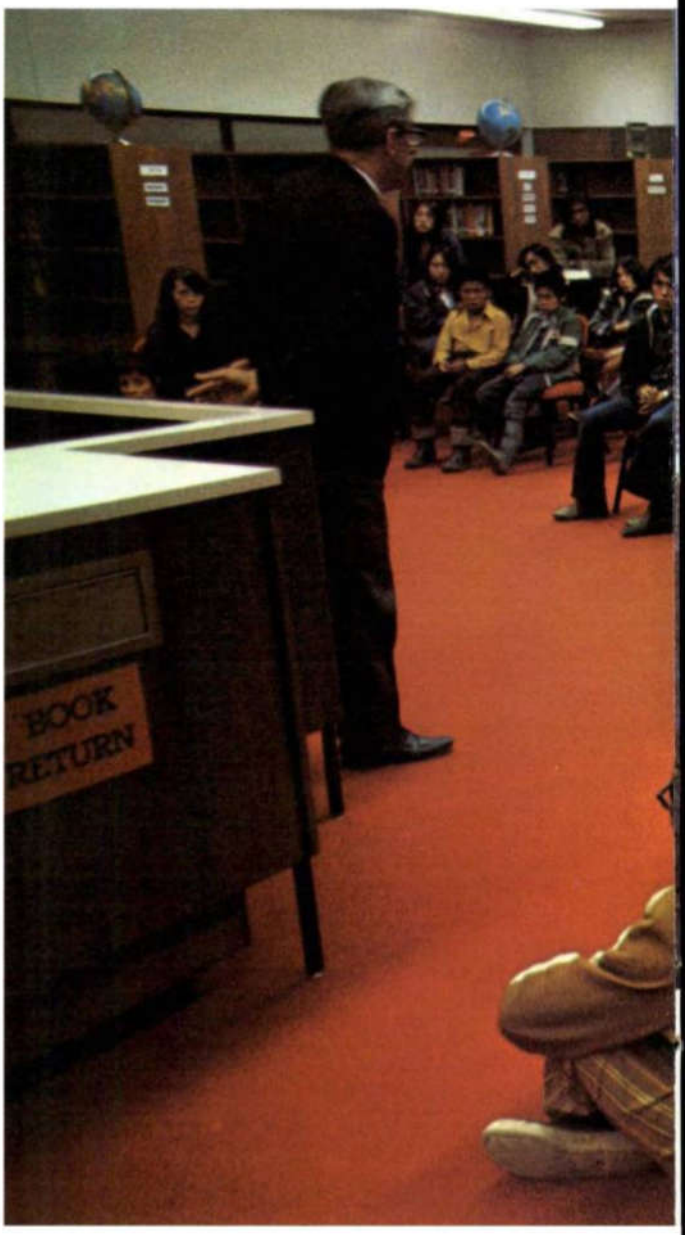
missionary who had travelled by dog team out of Pond Inlet, west to Igloolik and east to Pangnirtung between 1936 and 1941.

During his recent visit to Frobisher, Reverend Flint shared his memories of life on north Baffin Island with students in the library of the Gordon Robertson Educational Centre. Most of the youngsters listening to him have never handled a harpoon, driven a dog team, or lived in a snow house.

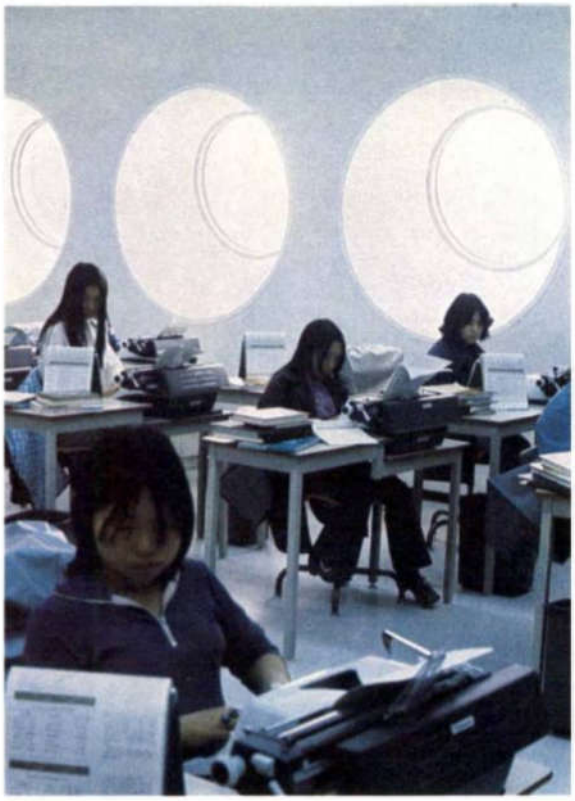
The school, constructed of white fibreglass panels on a steel grid, is located on Astro Hill near the Complex. This term it has an enrolment of 261 students. Most of them (75%) are Eskimo and have come in by air from outlying settlements on Baffin Island or the Central Arctic. Of the total, 174 are in the academic course that could lead to university or college in the south. (The Arctic now has its first Eskimo doctor, pilots and teachers.) Other students combine academic work with such 'life skills' as repairing

The Reverend Maurice Flint with students in the library of the Gordon Robertson Vocational Centre. Exterior and interior views of the Centre are below, right.





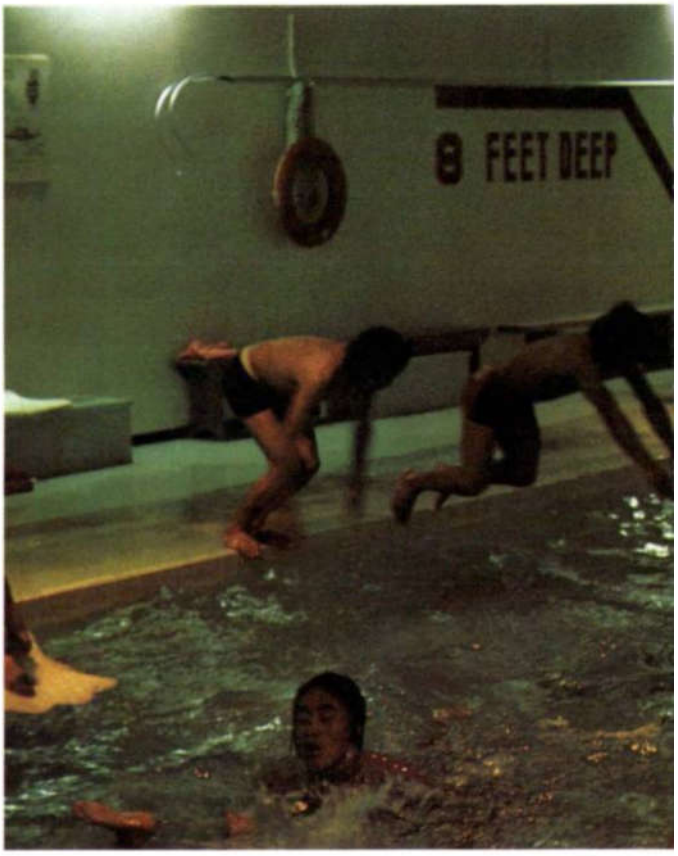
The school cafeteria, below, and in other scenes, students in a variety of courses designed to educate them in the ways of the past as well as the present. Below, centre, students are making harpoons.



a skidoo, and building a frame house or a kayak — using a covering of fibre glass rather than skins. Many take the Eskimo language course which includes the pre-history and history of the Eskimo people, their folklore and stories. Mrs Martha Tikvik comes in to the Centre for several hours each week to teach the girls how to sew duffle and make moose-hide boots; the boys go out on hunting trips, make food boxes, and lash together the traditional wooden kamotiks. Eskimo artists instruct in the basics of soapstone carving.

Below the crest of the Astro Hill Complex, the single dwellings of Ikaluit remain. Other houses have been moved down the road from Apex Hill for those families who have wished to come into the town. Planners had intended that the Apex community be phased out, but not all those who lived there agreed. Some were content to remain and to commute to work in town. Bus service along the short stretch of road brings housewives in for an afternoon of shopping. Other Eskimo families have moved into high-rise apartments or row housing.

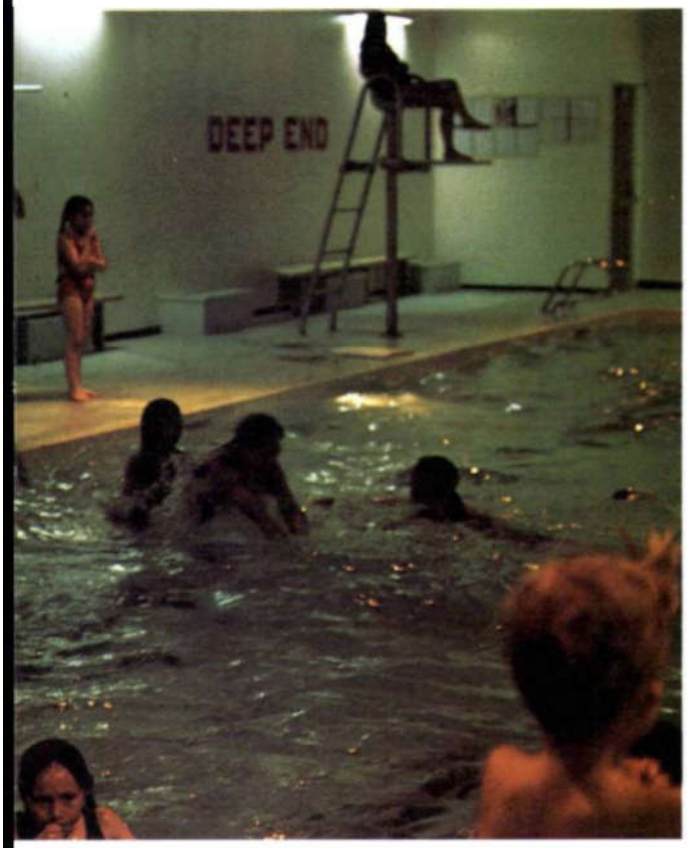
Aluki Lee in 'The Bay'.



Under a long-term agreement the government leases office and living accommodation from the construction firms. At the end of twenty years, rental buildings revert to the government for the sum of one dollar.

Along the mall, housewife Aluki Lee, on staff at the Frobisher Bay General Hospital, examines the selection of merchandise in 'The Bay' and young people swim in the clear green water of the pool. Beyond the lighted and heated enclosure, reminders of an earlier way of life remain. Patches of white Arctic cotton, once used for wicks in the seal-oil lamps, bloom in front of 'Ukkivik', the student hostel. The husky dog that played a vital role in the life of the Eskimo hunter survives in the role of family pet, and yellow snowmobiles that carry the present-day trapper around his line, are relegated to the outskirts of the community like the dogs of earlier days that were taken out to the islands for their idle summer months.

Student hostel.


DEEP END

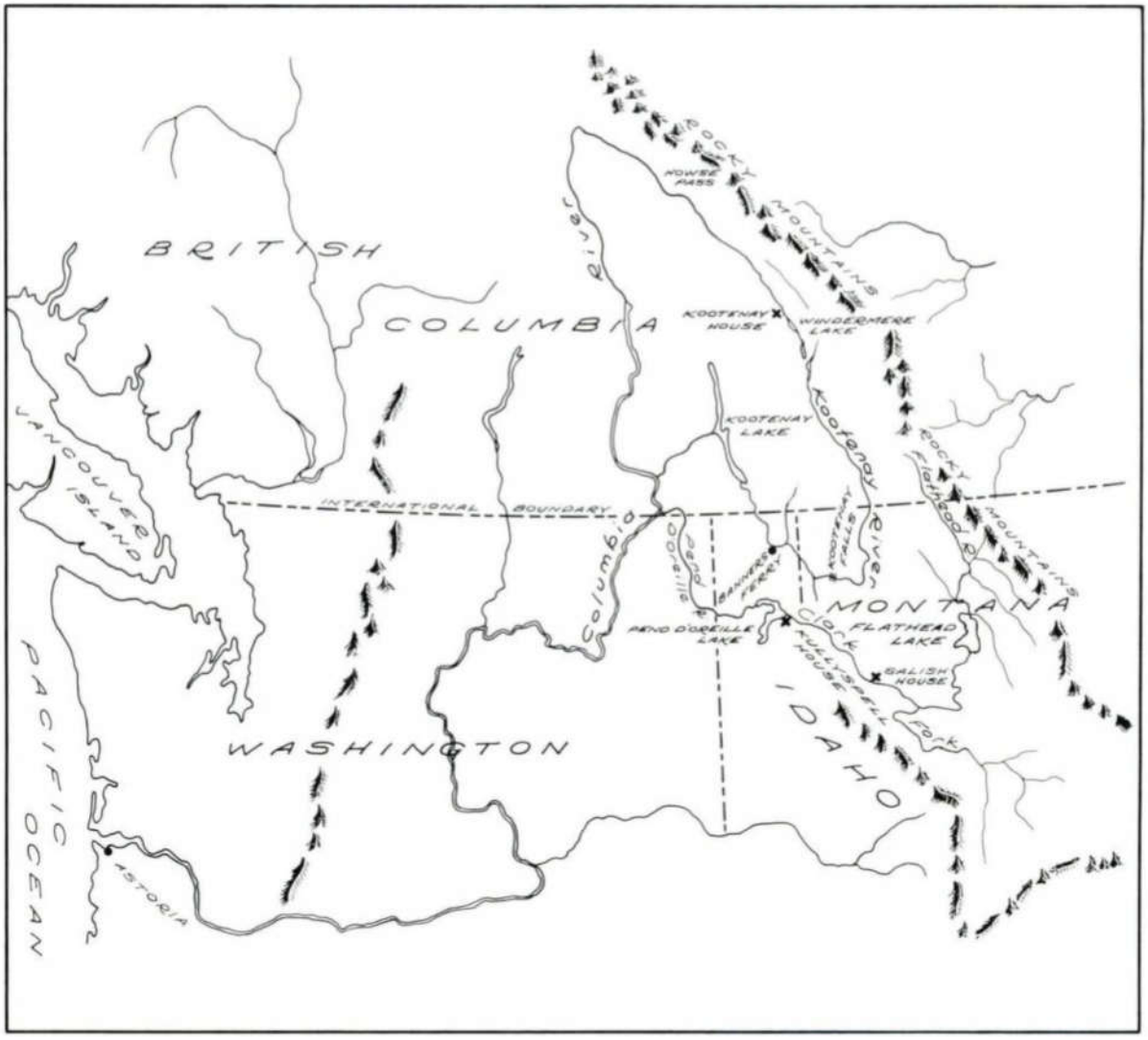
WINTON WEYDEMEYER

Columbia Lake.

THE DALLIANCE OF DAVID THOMPSON

CRITICISM HAS BEEN LEVELLED at David Thompson for his failure to reach the Pacific Coast in advance of the Astorians. This carping attitude is due to a lack of understanding of the ramifications of the task confronting Thompson.

Local topography involved in this search for the Columbia explains much. West of the divide is mountainous country with broken ranges and spurs angling off in all directions. It is not like the eastern slope of the Rockies on which a river will break out of a defile in the mountains and then head in a more or less direct course across the prairie. The rivers in this area are tortuous and confusing in their course around and



The author, H. D. Smiley, is a retired rancher who lives on the banks of the Kootenay River, Thompson's main channel. He has made a study of the topography and history of the area.

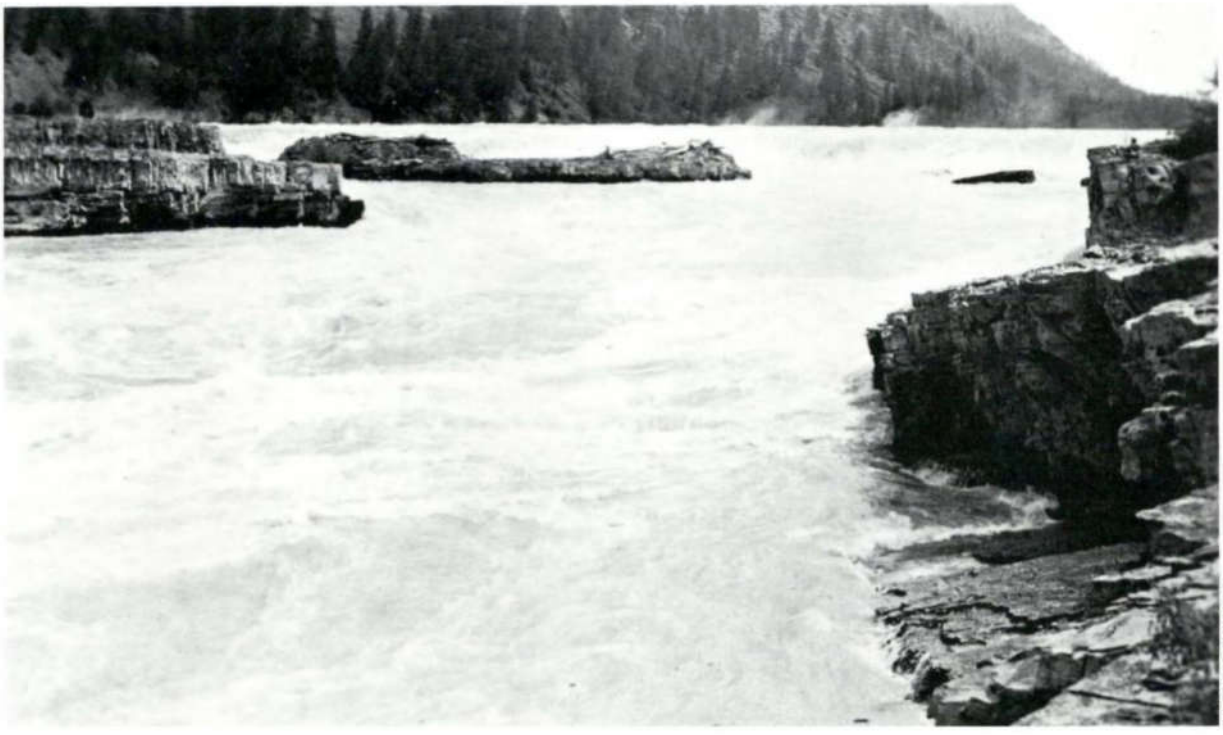
through these mountains. For instance the Kootenay River (Kootenai in the States) rises in the Continental Divide close to Banff, Alberta, flows south across the international boundary to Libby, Montana, where it turns west for a short distance, thence north-northwest back across the boundary into the southern end of Kootenay Lake. The Duncan River falls into this lake at its northern end, but the Kootenay issues from the western side of the lake and flows west to join the Columbia. The Flathead River leaves the southern end of Flathead Lake, which is about 75 miles southeast of the Kootenay River, and flows south to join the Clark Fork. The Clark Fork flows north-northwesterly to Pend d'Orielle Lake. The Pend d'Oreille River then issues from the lake and flows west, then north, then west to join the Columbia at the boundary. The Kootenay and Clark Fork are only twenty-five to fifty miles apart in part of their northwesterly courses.

The Columbia rises in British Columbia about a mile and a half from the headwaters of the Kootenay. It then flows about two hundred miles north to Wood River, makes a westerly 180° bend and continues south to pick up the Kootenay and the Pend d'Oreille, eventually turning west to reach the Pacific. These geographical details demonstrate the confusing nature and tangled courses of the rivers in the area.

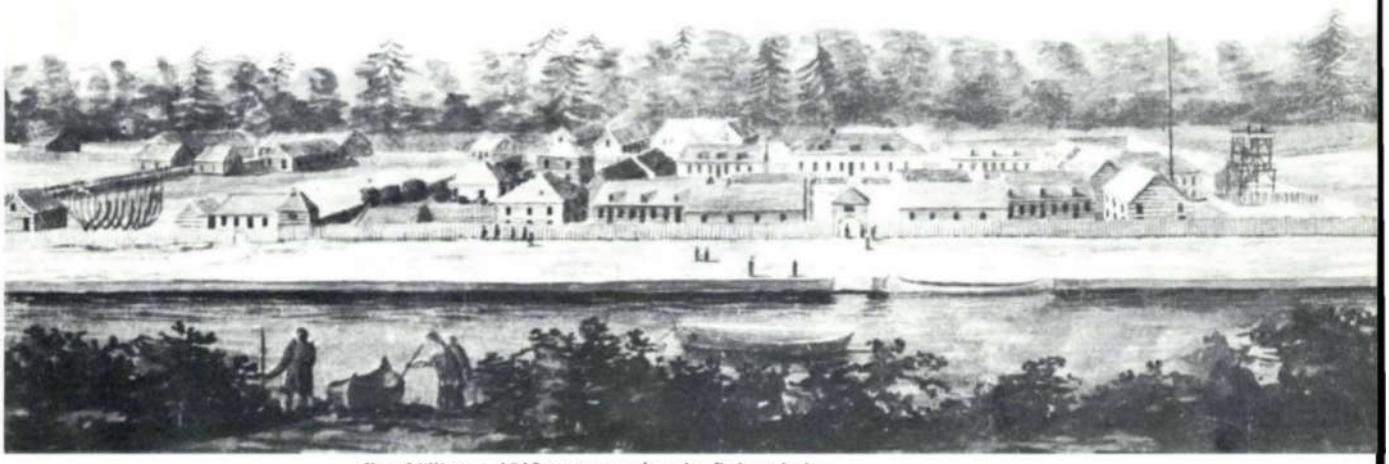
The criticism of Thompson covers his whole transmontane period, but, when analysed, is found to be two more or less separate charges. First, that he was dilatory in his penetration of the Northwest in the period between 1801 and 1810 – if he had been more aggressive and if he had followed the example of Alexander Mackenzie on the treks to the Arctic and Pacific in 1789 and 1793 he would have reached the mouth of the Columbia in plenty of time to have forestalled any attempt by John Jacob Astor to gain a foothold there for his Pacific Fur Company. Second, that on Thompson's final dash for the Pacific in 1810-11 he was exasperatingly and unconscionably slow. Admittedly he dilly-dallied for no demonstrable reason. Only a supposition can be offered in explanation. And such speculation is not too far beyond possibility in light of the circumstances surrounding Thompson's abrupt departure from Hudson's Bay Company employ to join the North West Company in 1797. Without any warning or explanation he packed up and went over to the opposition. He had received favourable comment from the Hudson's Bay Company Committee in London; they had taken extra pains to supply him with surveying implements, and he had a large credit with the Company. There was a special order placed by him for books and instruments incoming that year from England and a promotion was pending. Yet, he walked off and left. Some of his fellow employees conjectured as to his reason but there is no specific record – no letter of resignation, no remarks known in North West Company or Hudson's Bay Company records, no record of Company censure or dissatisfaction. His *Narrative* states that he received a letter from Joseph Colen while he was at Bedford House, denying him the right to do any more surveying and that that was his reason. There is doubt as to whether or not he ever received such a letter; no trace of it has been found. The Company was making an effort to retrench and it was possible his surveying activities might be curtailed, but he was well aware of Company policy that a year's notice was required for termination of employment. One must remember that his *Narrative* was written fifty years after all these events and that he is very vague on some subjects, circumlocutory on others and devious when it seems to suit his purpose.

On 28 June 1810 at Terre Blanche or White Earth House on the North Saskatchewan, in present-day Alberta, Alexander Henry, the younger, recorded in his journal, 'Mr. Thompson embarked with his family for Montreal, in a light canoe with five men and a Saulteur.' Then he records on 12 October the same year, 'I was astonished to hear that he [William Henry, a cousin] came from below, and had left Mr. Thompson near the North branch waiting for his people.' Thompson had been *en route* to Montreal to avail himself of an overdue leave but at Rainy Lake House was met by emissaries from the recent annual meeting of the partners at Fort William. The details of what transpired at that meeting

Kootenay Falls west of Libby, Montana.



WINTON WEYDEMEYER



Fort William c. 1812, a water-colour by Robert Irvine.

in regard to Astor's Pacific Fur Company venture and what explicit instructions, if any, Thompson received at Rainy Lake House are unknown, but surely a course of action was discussed at the meeting as Astor's intentions and preparations were well known to the North West Company. The message received by Thompson at Rainy Lake House could only have been an express dispatch of explicit orders.

James K. Smith in *David Thompson: Fur Trader, Explorer, Geographer* offers the following analysis of the circumstance:

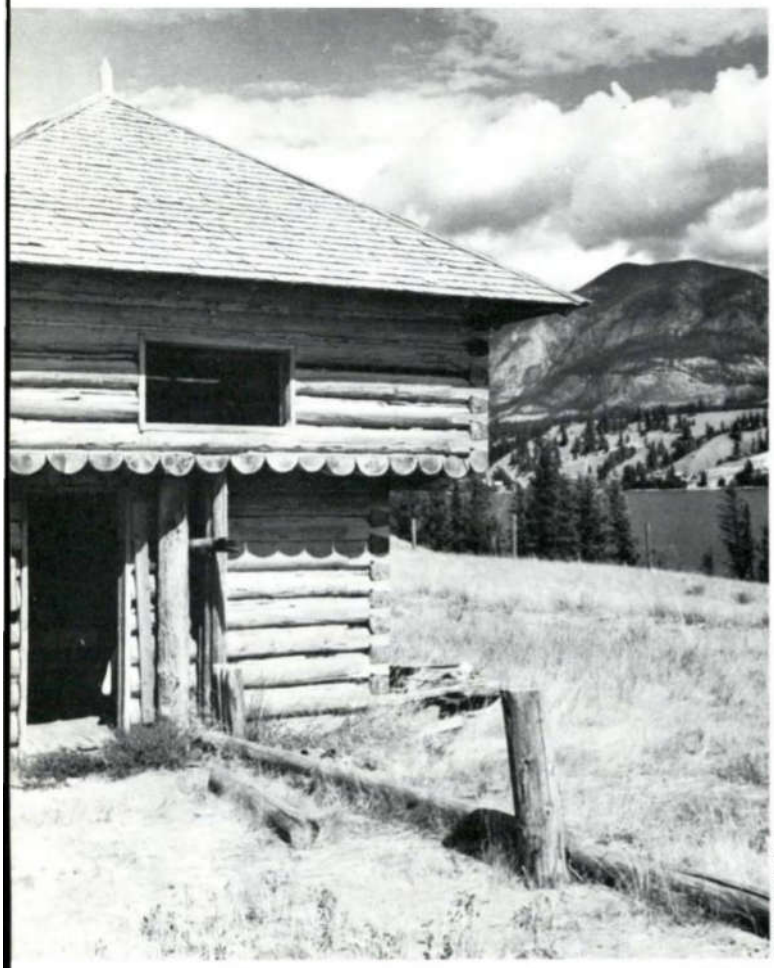
> What does Thompson say about his orders for 1810-11? The *Narrative* contains the sole statement that "my object was to be at the Pacific Ocean before the month of August", presumably a reference to the fact that, after that date (in 1811), he would have trouble getting back to the mountains in time to cross over to pick up supplies before the winter set in. However, in volume 35 of David Thompson's journals, preserved today in the Ontario government's Department of Public Records and Archives, Toronto, there are six foolscap sheets in his handwriting entitled *Discoveries from the east side of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean by David Thompson.* An entry under 1810 reads:
>
> April 15. Set off to recross the Mountains with the furs &c. to Lac la Pluie [Rainy Lake], where we arrived July 22nd, 1810. Mr. Astor, having engaged some of the clerks of the N.W. Co'y, formed a company and sent a vessel around Cape Horn to the Columbia. Everything was changed . . . I was now obliged to take 4 canoes and to proceed to the mouth of the Columbia to oppose them. Accordingly I set off from Lac la Pluie.

Thompson was the best qualified man in the Company to go to the Columbia, not only from his years of experience in travelling, trading and surveying, but also from his exclusive and intimate knowledge of the area to be traversed. Upon receipt of his orders it is conceivable that Thompson was downhearted, even to the extent of feeling persecuted or imposed upon. This could explain the desultory manner in which he performed the mission, but does not justify it. Professor Glover in his introduction to Volume XL of The Champlain Society's reprint of David Thompson's *Narrative* very ably and profoundly writes of this phase of Thompson's activities.

However, this does not apply to the charge that he was dilatory in pursuing a route to the mouth of the Columbia between the years 1801 and 1810. In all fairness to Thompson we cannot let his later actions tar his earlier performance merely because it was the same man in the same location. He was pursuing two different goals and he must be appraised in that light.

When Alexander Mackenzie made his renowned trip by the Peace River and part of the Fraser to Bella Coola on the Pacific in 1793 he did not accomplish much in the eyes of his fellow traders for, to quote from *The Fur Trade in Canada* by Harold A. Innis 'no feasible transport route to the Pacific had been found'. It brought no immediate financial return to his partners, nor did it show any promise. When he had gone down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic in 1789 the Company routinely accepted it and mundanely noted that it set geographical limits to further thoughts of expansion of the fur trade in that direction. After they had examined that area, again quoting Innis:

> There remained to be organized the territory of the Pacific coast drainage basin. The advantages of this trade had been recognized after the voyages of Captain James Cook. Alexander Henry's letters to William Edgar dated Montreal, September 1, 1785, and March 5, 1786 insisted on the possibilities of a route from the Northwest to the Pacific but Pond and Mackenzie had shown that no overland route was feasible. After the amalgamation with the XY Company in 1804, however, it became necessary to find new territory for the large number of partners. Moreover, the expedition of Lewis and Clark was regarded as a forecast of the possibilities of American competition. . . .



DONOVAN CLEMSON

In 1807 Thompson built Kootenay House to overlook Windermere Lake near this spot. The blockhouse, now falling into disrepair, is part of a memorial to the original fort.

The trip to the Pacific in 1793 was regarded as mere folly. The prevailing feeling in the fur trade was that it was a business and it had to show a profit. There might be times when assessment of a certain situation called for action which would result in a small or temporary loss to meet competition or unusual circumstances (much on the order of a 'year-end sale') but the overall, year-round business must show a profit. Thompson had been well grounded in this concept from the time he was first sent inland from York Factory by Humphrey Marten in 1786, through his years of service under William Tomison, to the time he left the Hudson's Bay Company.

With this background Thompson in 1801 participated in the first feelers put out by the North West Company for a way to establish trade with the Indians on the Pacific Coast and a possible route to the Pacific Ocean. He knew of Mackenzie's journey to the Pacific and that the river he travelled was probably not the Columbia, and, even if it were, that the route had no *practical* application. He must also have been familiar with both Vancouver's and Gray's identification of the mouth of the Columbia which was discovered in May 1792. This great river came out of the interior at a known point but knowledge of the area of its source was still indefinite. In any case, a more southerly and direct route would have to be found to have any value or application to the fur trade. Professor E. E. Rich in *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857* wrote: 'The route discovered by Alexander Mackenzie was already authenticated, but it was too difficult; Thompson's task was to seek an easier and more southerly route, by which a constant flow of trade to the Pacific coast and so to China might be maintained.' In speaking of this first attempt to penetrate the Rockies in 1801 Arthur S. Morton in *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* says:

> The importance of Duncan M'Gillivray's journey does not lie in any discoveries he may have made so much as in the fact that he and the North West Company were feeling their way to the Columbian enterprise as early as 1800-1. . . . The Columbian enterprise was not pushed in the years immediately subsequent to M'Gillivray's first attempt. This was doubtless due to the need of men and capital during the fierce struggle with the XY Company, but also to the fear that the enterprise would bring financial loss, if the furs were to be carried all the way across the continent to Montreal. In his *Some Account of the Trade carried on by the North West Company*, written by Duncan M'Gillivray in the months before his death in April 1808, and when Fraser's posts in New Caledonia had been built, he says: "The trade as it is carried on at present beyond the mountains, instead of getting any profit, is a very considerable loss to the Company, as the Furs did not pay for the transport to Montreal, where they were shipped." . . . It says much for the eagerness of Duncan M'Gillivray and the North West Company for the Columbian enterprise that, despite their failure to secure the short line of transportation, they went on with the policy of advance across the Rockies and to the Pacific coast. They must have been confident that careful management would overcome their difficulties. In the light of this, reforms and economies recorded in the so called *Minutes of the North West Company* may well be noted.

Morton then goes on to summarize many of the changes agreed upon in attempts over three or four years to increase the financial return to the Nor'Westers. The Company was not unduly concerned or overly eager to open this trade but was cognizant of its possibilities if it could be developed economically.

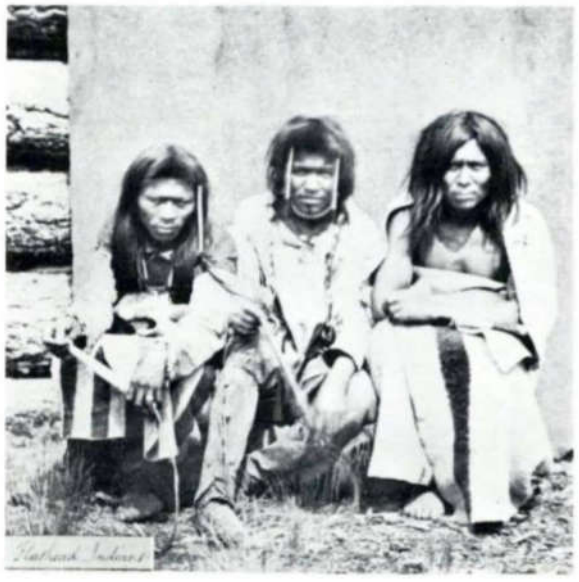
So, after this first attempt to cross the Rockies in 1801 by Duncan McGillivray, James Hughes and Thompson the idea was allowed, not to lapse, but to lie fallow while other problems were wrestled with. In his book *Montreal and the Fur Trade*, E. E. Rich says:

> During the period of hostility the outrageous conduct of the Indian trade absorbs attention and obscures the fact that the two Montreal concerns were absorbed in rivalry for something of greater significance than their race to secure the hunts of the Athabaskan (and other) Indians. Mackenzie's route to the Pacific was indeed of no serious value to the fur trade. It must be improved on. But any new route would still start from Athabaska, or perhaps from the upper reaches of the Saskatchewan, and would lead into the Rockies in a southwesterly direction. If, as was inescapable, both Northwest Companies accepted that the all-important brigades for the Pacific must start out from Athabaska, then they were forced also to accept the fact that the long haul from Montreal to Athabaska was a handicap.

In 1806 the project was activated again, perhaps because Mackenzie re-entered the Company in 1804 when amalgamation of the North West and the XY Companies occurred. His known enthusiasm for the idea of development of the Pacific trade, coupled with Duncan McGillivray's, could have been the motivating and overriding influence at the Fort William meetings of the Wintering Partners. Arthur S. Morton writes:

> It has been argued that the Columbian enterprise was the result of the American expedition to the Pacific commanded

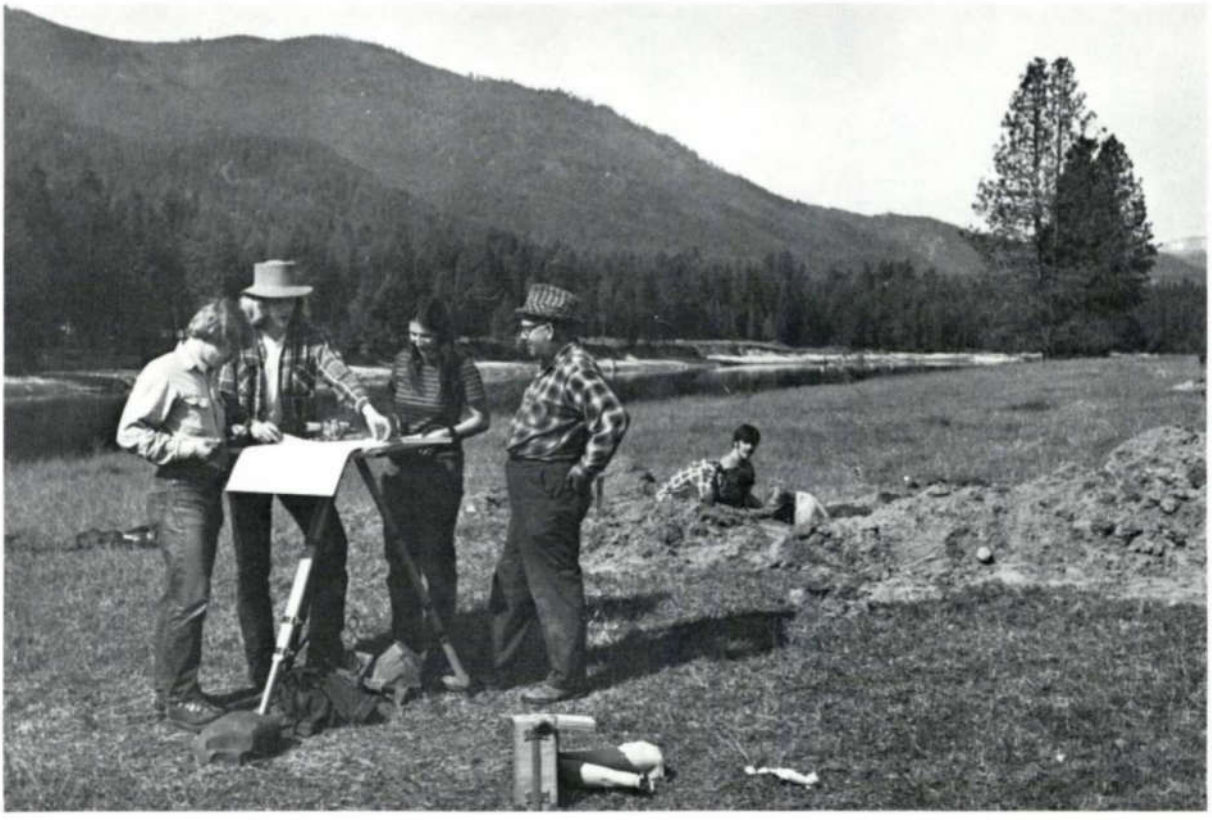
These Indian people were photographed in the area of Thompson's travels by a member of the North American Boundary Commission 1860-61. The couple are identified as Pend d'Oreille Indians, the group of three are Flathead Indians, and the mother and child are members of a large Salish tribe.



R. E. CORPS LIBRARY

On the left is a pile of stone believed to be from the original fireplace of Kullyspell House, and below is the excavation of the area under a fire hearth, at Salish House.

Diggings at Salish House, 1971, under Dr C. I. Malouf of Montana University.



THAIN WHITE

by Lewis and Clark. Rather, it arose out of Alexander Mackenzie's spectacular voyage to the Western Sea and his scheme to go in and take possession of the coastal fur trade. The subsequent expedition of Lewis and Clark could be no more than an additional incentive. The enterprise was the fixed policy of Duncan M'Gillivray when he was Wintering Partner on the Saskatchewan and during his years as agent for the Company, and it was finally launched in his last year but one, for he died on April 9, 1808.

As a direct indication of the general trend of thought within the trade, James Bird of the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton House, in a letter of 1806, says 'Mr. David Thompson is making preparations for another attempt to cross the Mountains, pass through [the Kutenai country] and follow the Columbia River to the Sea. He is to have eight Men with him, and object of his enterprise is said to be, to ascertain positively whether a Trade can be formed with that Country valuable enough to be worth pursuing thro the difficulties with which it must be attended, and if it should, the uniting of the commerce of the two Seas.'

All this is conclusive evidence that when Thompson first engaged in this transmontane travel it was no crash program – merely a pilot project. He had to determine that it was economically feasible.

After Thompson made the crossing in 1807 he was in new country – the country described at the beginning of this article. He had no road maps, no tourist information booths, no filling stations for ready reference and direction and he found himself on a northward flowing river. It might well be that the first thought to enter his mind was that Mackenzie followed a northward flowing river on the east side of these same mountains and ended up at the Arctic Ocean. He no doubt knew of Mackenzie's route and he may have had some information officially or unofficially of Lewis and Clark as there were close personal and financial ties between St. Louis, Montreal, New York and Michilimackinac. It is extremely unlikely that he had seen the first published work on Lewis and Clark which appeared in 1807. He did not want to go northward, but south and west. So, he went up this river which happened to be the Columbia, and camped close to its headwaters. Just south of this, with a one and one-half mile portage, he found a southward flowing river, the Kootenay. He then stopped and built Kootenay House back on the headwaters of the Columbia just below Lake Windermere. He stayed here the rest of 1807 trading with the Kootenay Indians. In the spring of 1808 he portaged over the Kootenay and went down it to about present-day Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, where the river turns north again. He proceeded down it as far as Kootenay Lake where he may have become discouraged by its direction. At any rate, he turned back a few miles, went up the Moyie River, a tributary of the Kootenay and then overland to Kootenay House. Here he picked up the furs he had collected during the year, and went back across the mountains to exchange the fur for more trade goods. In October of 1808 he was back on the Columbia again at Kootenay House when he sent Finan McDonald on south to Kootenay House to spend the winter trading. In April 1809 he took the winter trade of fur back as far as Fort Augustus (now Edmonton) on the North Saskatchewan and then returned to the Columbia, reaching it on 20 August. He went down the Kootenay as far as Bonner's Ferry where he traded for horses with the Flathead and Kootenay Indians, continued *south* overland to Pend d'Oreille Lake and built Kullyspell House. He spend the remainder of the fall of 1809 travelling up and down the Clark Fork, over to the Kootenay and back, finally building Salish House on the Clark Fork. In the spring of 1810 he made several trips up the Clark Fork and its tributary, the Flathead, and then decided to go down the Pend d'Oreille as he was led to believe it joined the Columbia even though it was flowing northwesterly. It became unnavigable in its lower course so he returned to Kullyspell House. In May he started the trip east with the fur, going this time across the plains to Rainy Lake. He apparently wanted to make a personal report to the Wintering Partners and to take his promised and postponed leave. At Rainy Lake House he received the orders which turned him around and sent him direct to the mouth of the Columbia.

Some could call all this time spent in Montana and Idaho dilatory. Viewed in the light of there being no exigency and that it was incumbent upon Thompson (from training, experience and, perhaps, explicit orders from the Company) to ascertain, as he went, the most practical route, to obtain the friendship of the Indians, perhaps to write periodic reports so that the Company could assess his progress, and above all to pay his way, it can be understood that in this maze of rivers and mountains he accomplished his mission as well as could be expected of anyone. He obtained enough information in these years to enable him when he did engage in an express journey in 1811 to the mouth of the Columbia to go through this country and find the Columbia without any dawdling. Further extenuation of his conduct for these years of 1806-10 is expressed by E. E. Rich.

> The hostility of the Piegans made it desirable that Thompson should avoid their territory. He tried the Pend d'Oreille River, came back to Kullyspell House, returned from there to the Kootenay River, and then went back to spend the winter 1809-10 at a new post which he built, Salish House, about a hundred miles up-river from Kullyspell House. In 1810 he tried the Pend d'Oreille River again but found it "a terrible cataract" and reconciled himself reluctantly to using the Kootenay River, despite the fact that it ran through Piegan territory. Again, however, he did not immediately embark on his project but returned eastward. He was back at Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan in June and arrived at Rainy Lake in July 1810. There he found urgent orders from the North West partners, stimulated into frantic activity by news that the American Fur Company had been formed by John Jacob Astor to take over the fur trade of the west.

David Thompson has been maligned for this period in his life although he did what a careful, prudent man would do in similar circumstances and he did it in a workmanlike manner. His achievements have been misunderstood by persons unfamiliar with his problems, which were a combination of geography and economics. ◆

A Governor-General Goes North

BY MARGERY HINDS

Miss Hinds is author of 'Makpa' and other books on Arctic Canada.

Photos: Geological Survey of Canada.

In the summer 1971 issue of 'The Beaver', Miss Hinds described the first part of Governor-General Earl Grey's trip to Hudson Bay by way of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers. His return down Hudson Strait and along the coast of Newfoundland follows:

IT WAS HALF PAST EIGHT in the evening, 20 August 1910 when Governor-General Earl Grey and his party set out from York Factory on Hudson Bay to board the ship that was to take them on the second part of His Excellency's visit to the North. The first part of the journey – six hundred miles by lake and river – had ended that morning when they inspected the mouth of the Nelson River as a possible site for a port and terminus of the proposed Hudson Bay Railway. Now the Canadian Government Steamer *Earl Grey*, 2,500 tons, which was anchored some fifteen miles out to sea because of shallow waters nearer shore, was to take them to Churchill, Manitoba, to consider port and terminus possibilities there.

'The night was very dark and there was great difficulty in keeping in the narrow channel of the Hayes River' wrote Major J. D. Moodie of the R.N.W.M.P. who had done the main planning for the expedition. The launch did not reach the ship until two o'clock the following morning 'what with shoals and a cloudy night and a wholly erratic compass'.

Even so, it arrived three hours ahead of the coast boat in which Major Trotter had left York Factory with the servants and the baggage. That boat ran aground outside the outer buoy. An excellent passage to Churchill followed this unfortunate beginning. 'It might have been across the Mediterranean for warmth and blueness of sky and sea' was Professor John MacNaughton's impression.

Two other ships were already at Churchill when they dropped anchor opposite the R.N.W.M.P. barracks. One was the police schooner, *Jeanie*, which was to leave for Fullerton next morning with Superintendent Starnes and Assistant Surgeon Marcellus on board: the other was the *Pelican*, a former man-of-war but in 1910 the Hudson's Bay Company's vessel.

On their way into the harbour His Excellency and party scanned their surroundings, no doubt comparing them with the 'shallow water and extensive sandbanks and the two great rivers to keep them constantly supplied with fresh silt' that they had seen at the Nelson.

'This is something like a harbour!' His Excellency exclaimed. 'High rocky ground all round, deep water almost everywhere and plenty of room for anchorage.'

'As a matter of fact' L. S. Amery of the London *Times* wrote afterwards, 'the whole Nelson scheme was only initiated because it was understood that the natural and sheltered harbour at Churchill had a rocky bottom and so could not be expanded to accommodate the expected traffic. In the end, after millions had been spent on works at the Nelson mouth, someone took the

trouble to make actual borings at Churchill and found the bottom excellent and ample in extent for all possible requirements.'

His Excellency was still on deck when Superintendent Starnes came on board and the whole party went up river by launch to visit the Hudson's Bay Company post where they watched the *Pelican* set out for home.

Here, and later at the mission, they saw 'tepees of the mild and smiling Eskimos'. Professor MacNaughton described them as 'the most good natured looking people I have ever seen, the most appreciative of and responsive to a gentle greeting. They are also excellent and steady workers, the women being very dexterous with their fingers.'

From the mission His Excellency walked to the police barracks, then to old Fort Prince of Wales, and throughout his tour he kept in mind the question of a site for future docks. To complete his visit to Churchill he 'held a pow-wow with the natives', then invited Superintendent and Mrs Starnes to dine on board.

That same evening in fine clear weather the *Earl Grey* left for Port Burwell. They were not far on their way when, as Major Moodie reported 'at about 3 a.m. in the morning of August 23rd the compass refused to work. At 3.10 it was working a little. Then at 3.30 it took two complete turns and gradually came back to course. This was when we were crossing the line of "no variation".'

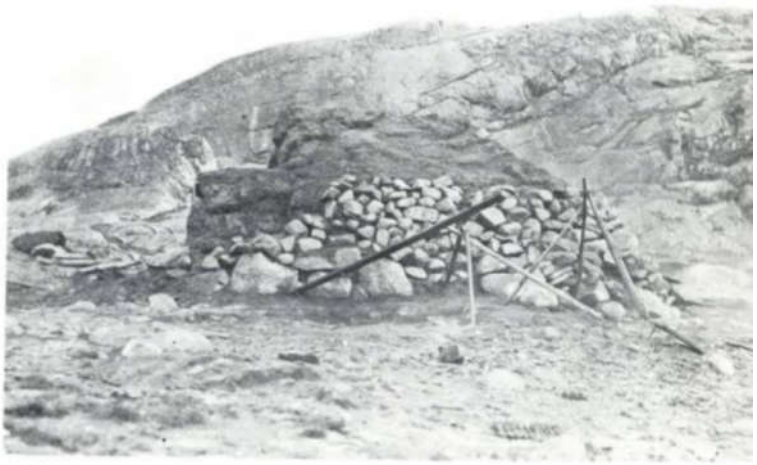
The ship passed near to Coates Island and an hour or two later His Excellency and some others went by launch to visit Prefontaine Harbour — 'a magnificent basin on the north coast of Ungava which could easily accommodate the whole British fleet'. They returned to the *Earl Grey* and 'proceeded along the north of Charles Island where they saw some walrus, but being late did not go after them'. Next morning, very early, they sighted a fair-sized iceberg and soon changed course so as to 'coast along Baffin's Land to get glimpses of the Grinnel Glacier'. At intervals throughout the day they saw more icebergs and by nightfall were off Port Burwell, 'a small deepwater harbour . . . on the most northern point of Ungava'.

For the next two days the *Earl Grey* was at Burwell taking in water and some of the coal left there by Major Moodie in 1906. Eskimos re-bagged the coal and assisted in taking it on board despite incessant rain and heavy fog. The *Earl Grey* burnt a ton and a half of coal an hour and her full capacity was one thousand tons of coal.

His Excellency spent much time ashore and 'visited the Moravian Mission whose Eskimo settlement provided a welcome supply of delicious fresh cod'. He invited the missionaries, Mr and Mrs Semiens and Mr and Mrs Goldby to dine and afterwards gave them some books.

L. S. Amery, writing later, described the missions as dreary spots — 'little clumps of huts, swarming with fierce Eskimo dogs, set against a background of bare glacier-scoured rock. Many of them were almost wiped

The HBC post at Churchill.



An Eskimo sod house.

Eskimo visitors aboard the 'Earl Grey'.

out by the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918. The missionaries all protested that we should not judge their stations by the chilly damp and general unpleasantness of summer but should visit them in winter when all was clean with snow and brilliant in glorious sunshine and when travelling on sledge or ski was easy in every direction.'

The fog was so thick when the ship left Burwell on 29 August that they had to keep well out to sea and were unable to go into Nachvak. But it cleared somewhat as they approached Cape Mugford where they engaged a native pilot to take them to Okak. Here, about twenty fishing schooners were anchored, and their pilot told them 'All fishermen, no fish.'

Okak was described by Professor MacNaughton as 'another Moravian Mission Station, a very active summer centre of the Newfoundland cod-fishing industry. Here His Excellency did an exceedingly well-conceived piece of international entertainment. He had all the crews of the Newfoundland schooners lying at anchor nearby to high tea on board the *Earl Grey* where they had the first taste of fresh meat which had regaled their palates for a long time.' After the meal 'His Excellency talked to them in the heartiest way.' He indicated that there were many ludicrous prejudices abroad in their country regarding the dismal consequences of union with Canada and gave some blood-curdling instances. Canada, he hinted, was not at all eager for union but would not be too coy if the advances came from the other side. Like a maiden who says 'I'll take you if you ask me.'

At the time of Earl Grey's visit to Okak, Major Moodie reported that 'the Esquimau population here is 348 all told. Males married 76, unmarried 39. Mission was established 1761. The graves in the cemetery are numbered and reach 1369.'

L. S. Amery commented that 'here as in other places the Eskimos eagerly swarmed on board to explore the ship and to beg for any metal articles that they could embody in their hunting or fishing implements. I won great popularity as the possessor of a stock of old safety razor blades and was given a pair of Eskimo fishing waders, of thin scraped sealskin, feather light, and so finely sown [*sic*] as to be absolutely watertight. I first put my new treasures in my cabin, but a few hours later thought they had better stand in the passage outside. Next morning the inmates of neighbouring cabins protested and my obliging steward suggested that they would be safer somewhere near the fo'c's'le. A day later he reported sorrowfully that the crew were threatening mutiny unless they went overboard, which they did. They were lovely things, but for sheer, quiet *crescendo* of odoriferousness I have not come across their equal.'

The *Earl Grey* left Okak at six o'clock in the morning on 31 August in foggy, cold, damp weather which continued for most of the way to Indian Harbour on Hamilton Inlet. It cleared before they arrived at Dr Grenfell's Deep Sea Mission. Here Dr Stuart who was in charge, welcomed the Governor-General and his party and showed them the mission. Major Moodie described the visit. 'Everything here is in beautiful order. Miss

The mission at Port Burwell.

Child, an American is the nurse in charge of the hospital. After being most hospitably entertained at afternoon tea, His Excellency and party returned on board. Miss Child, Dr Stuart and a young medical student, also an American, came on board at His Excellency's invitation and dined with us.'

That same evening Earl Grey sent a message to Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier that was transmitted by The Great North Western Telegraph Company of Canada, and is now in the Public Archives of Canada:

> Splendid trip left Norpo [*sic*] House with twelve canoes afternoon August eighth arrived York engine [*sic*] August nineteenth excepting one day delayed by winds and rain weather beautiful buring [*sic*] whole canoe journey every day ideal picnic Major Moody's [*sic*] arrangements admirable not a single drawback I inspected Mouth of Nelon [*sic*] River August twentieth visited Churchill August twenty second crossed Hudson Bay in perfect weather no suspicion anywhere of frozen north only reminds of high latitude by a few beautiful Atlantic icebergs viewed under brilliant blue sky at entrance Hudson Straits according to our experience Hudson Bay as safe and enjoyable for navigation at this time of year as the Solent or Mediterranean. Steamer lady [*sic*] Grey most comfortable. Please repeat above to Lady Grey. 11.50 p.m. Grey

The next morning, 2 September, they left for St. Anthony, headquarters of Dr Grenfell's Mission, where they arrived early on 3 September. Major Moodie reported:

> Dr Grenfell was unfortunately away on the Labrador Coast in his hospital steamer the "Strathcona". Dr Armstrong who is in charge during the absence of Dr Grenfell showed us over the Mission, Guest house, orphanage, machine and

A part of the Grenfell reindeer herd.

The Grenfell hospital at St. Anthony.

A fishing schooner arriving at St. Anthony from the Labrador.

Lady Northcliffe entertains.

carpenter shops, stores, etc. Everything was in the most perfect order. All buildings are lighted by electricity and have telephone communication with one another and with the different quarters occupied by the doctors. Dr Stuart resides here in the winter. There were several patients in bed in the hospital besides a number who were able to be up sunning themselves in comfortable chairs in the spacious verandahs. Ten nurses, most of whom, if not all, give their services gratuitously, look after the mission. Many of them are American girls. They all appear to be in love with their work and most enthusiastic. Many alterations and improvements are being made in the buildings which when completed, as they will be in a very short time, will make this hospital as perfect as any in the centre of civilization. This mission reflects unbounded credit on Dr Grenfell and all who are giving their services to such a grand institution. Mrs Grenfell invited His Excellency and party to luncheon when we again met the ladies. After a pleasant hour we went, accompanied by Drs Stuart and McKenzie and some of the nurses, about four miles across the hills to see the herd of reindeer. These are quite tame and herded like sheep by men and Lap (*sic*) dogs. On returning to the mission afternoon tea was served and we re-embarked after a most interesting and enjoyable day. His Excellency went on board one of the fishing schooners in the harbour and had a talk with the men. The season along the Labrador coast has been the worst for years. The fishermen believe that the decreased catches during the last two or three years are due to the destruction of the whales. The small fish are not driven into the coast and therefore the cod do not come in.

Others reporting on this visit to St. Anthony emphasized the hope that gradually the 'reindeer, able to live off the grass and moss of the country and useful for meat and milk as well as for transport, might supplant the Eskimo dog. Alas! during the war [1914-18] the herd was scattered and destroyed by dogs and poachers.'

The *Earl Grey* left St. Anthony on 4 September and arrived at Bay of Islands next day during the afternoon.

From the bleakness of Labrador and St. Anthony it was a pleasant change to anchor in the lovely tree-clad surroundings of Bay of Islands. Lord Grey had received a delicate intimation from the Newfoundland Ministry that they were enthusiastically eager to welcome him to their island, but that a visit to St. Johns [*sic*] itself might lead their opponents to suggest that some plot in favour of annexation to Canada was in the air, and might have disastrous consequences for themselves. To be suspected of desiring annexation to Canada has always been the gravest crime of which any Newfoundland public man could be accused, while it has also been the one solution of Newfoundland's difficulties which every Newfoundland public man has, in confidence, admitted to be the most natural . . . The immediate problem was disposed of by a compromise. Lord Grey was not to visit St. Johns, but Ministers were to come across the island to meet him in a special train, and together we were to proceed half-way to St. Johns and enjoy the hospitality of Lord and Lady Northcliffe at Grand Falls.

Here Lord Northcliffe's vision and enterprise had created, in virgin forest, a new source of living for the island in the shape of a great pulp and paper industry. We spent a day inspecting the vast floats of lumber coming down the river, the mountains of short logs piled up ready for grinding to pulp in the factory, the great factory itself and the well-laid-out and well-built township that had already sprung up round it. Another day we went out whaling from Botwood, the port of Grand Falls — not old-fashioned whaling with boats and harpoons, but the modern scientific business with a harpoon-gun. Beyond spotting the whale and getting within range there was little excitement in it, for once within range the gun did the rest and the poor harmless black and white ribbed monster soon lay floating alongside to be joined by another before we gave up chase for the day. Most exciting of all, perhaps, after our weeks in tents and cabins,

was enjoying the delights of an English country house in that "Lodge in the Wilderness" which Lady Northcliffe's taste and sense of home comfort had created.

Despite the diversions, Earl Grey did not neglect his duties. On 5 September he wrote to Sir Wilfrid Laurier about his trip in a letter one thousand and twenty-one words long. The Government House stationery on which it was written was edged with black, to indicate the period of mourning for King Edward VII.

Every important aspect of His Excellency's journey was covered in this cheerful letter but two points received special emphasis:

(1) that the Hudson Bay route is as safe as any other sea for summer navigation and
(2) that Dr Grenfell has discovered through his reindeer experiment how to convert your up to now barren lands into the Larder of Canada.

I saw his Herd of Sleek Fat Reindeer 2 days ago and was quite delighted with what I saw and heard about them. They cost absolutely nothing to feed and are at once the Milk and Meat and the Transport of the Frozen North.

I have asked Major Moodie whether your NWMP Posts could each take charge of a herd. He says there wd. be no difficulty whatsoever if the Govt. would only go to the expense of supplying each Post with the foundation of a breeding Herd. If the U.S.A. are justified in spending $20,000 on Reindeer Developts in Alaska, do you not think that the more pressing conditions of Canada call for at least twice as large an appropriation for Reindeer. Increase in the country shortly to be opened by your I.B. Railway? Moodie maintains that each NWMP Post could undertake the charge of a lot of Reindeer without adding a single Policeman to your force.

After several paragraphs about the missions and the fishermen His Excellency's comments on the staff at St. Anthony suggest that not only reindeer appealed to his eyes. 'One young woman of 30 a multi millionaire from New York and richer still in looks than in pocket was acting as Housekeeper of the Hospital. . . . America is giving both England and Canada an example which we might follow without doing ourselves any harm – Piety cheerfulness Mirth and service seem to be the Motto of these Grenfell missions.'

He then outlines his plans in which he says he hopes to 'call at Charlotte Town in the hope of making the acquaintance of the young Authoress of Anne of Green Gables– the best Canadian Novel I have yet read.'

So from Bay of Islands the *Earl Grey* put across to Sydney, Cape Breton where His Excellency and party 'inspected coal mines and iron works and enjoyed some pleasant boat sailing in the lovely land-locked waters of the district.' Then, after visiting the ruins of Louisbourg they went to Prince Edward Island. But Lucy Maud Montgomery was not at Charlottetown and no one knew for sure whether she was actually at Cavendish at that particular time. His Excellency visited Dr McPhail, 'most original and argumentative of political philosophers, when not excelling as a surgeon or as a grower of record potatoes.' Then the *Earl Grey* went up the St. Lawrence and anchored under the lee of the great cliff which rises up to the old Citadel where Lady Grey and her daughters were waiting to welcome the Governor-General with balls and entertainment. ◆

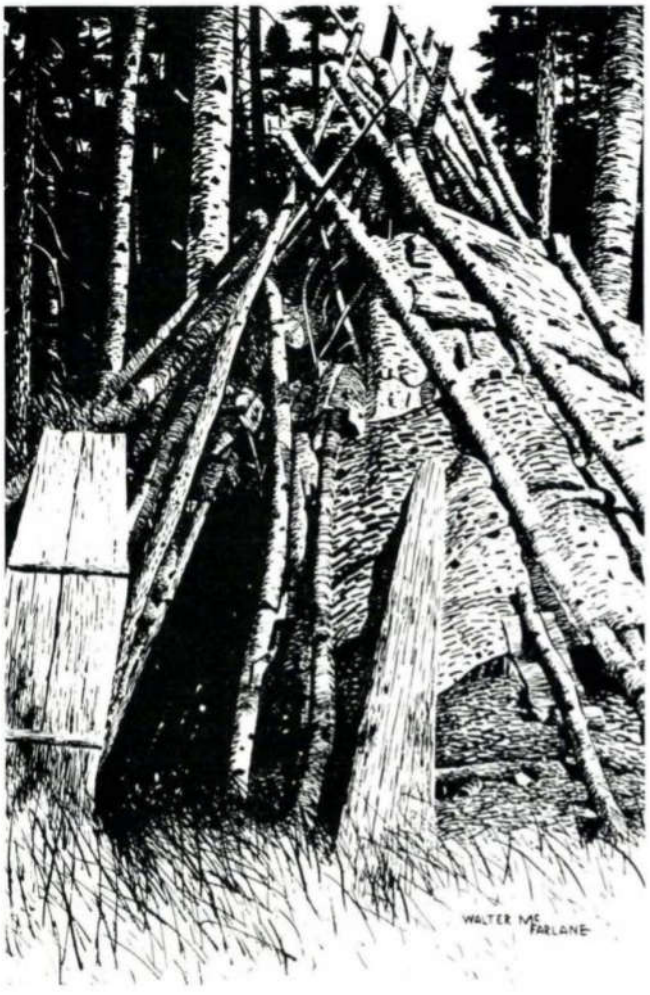
Whaler pursues a whale.

Dominion Iron and Steel Plant at Sydney, Nova Scotia.

WILDERNESS ARTIST

BY CALVIN RUTSTRUM

Author of 'North American Canoe Country' and other books on living in the wilderness, Mr Rutstrum has been acquainted with Walter McFarlane for over twenty years.



SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO LOOK with forlorn sentiment upon early paintings by wilderness artists. The reason is often made apparent. They tend to think that the wilderness as a true entity came to its dramatic end after such earlier artists as Heming, Hopkins, Remington, Russell, and a host of other notables were on hand to depict it. Certain aspiring artists, no less, in their effort to choose an appropriate wilderness subject today, flounder in the same nostalgia.

Those who consider the elemental wilderness to be a lost epoch, should go and make their own revealing discovery – that it still exists, spread over much of the world. Canadian artist and woodsman, Walter McFarlane, knowing today's wilderness by intimate association, would deny that his wilderness art productions or his wilderness life style has in any way been out of phase with the times.

Individualism, thus, might suggest at least one truth: you *can* be yourself whatever your urge, if you have the intestinal fortitude to do so. After being acquainted with McFarlane for more than twenty years, I find it safe to say that his disregard for compelling conventional art trends, has allowed him to freely express the wilderness in his paintings. Once when I posed the modernizing threat, he said with a shrug 'Montreal and New York are mere trading posts.' In his oil, *Indian Mother at Tea Fire,* we see a subject wholly alien to a modern, urban world and as close perhaps to the wilderness as pristine sentiment could desire. And if we travel into Northern Ontario, Indian mothers in no small number are still making tea fires – unless what I see in my own wilderness travels are merely hallucinatory ghost images of the past.

Walter McFarlane.

As with the appraisal of all art, posterity will determine how well McFarlane's work has been imbued with the 'pure art form' (whatever that is), but anyone with long exposure to the wilderness will have no trouble equating it with the 'silent places'. Even the urban dwellers who have not yet been able to stray far enough from megalopolis, seem to find McFarlane's paintings refreshing – at least, there is no conflict with what they presume the wilderness to be.

McFarlane, born in Davenport, New York, of Scottish ancestry, is now 55 years old. Through 1937, '38 and '39, and a year following World War II, he studied art at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York. From that period on, his art career edged forward rather slowly. He was confident, he told me, but sensed the danger of becoming over confident. To his way of thinking, too many artists were like some swimmers – expecting to swim as champions or paint as masters on the first stroke.

Writers get a variety of mail from readers. In my mail packet one morning some years ago I found a letter that came out of the mud and blood of war in Germany – from an American soldier who loved the wilderness and had the *Beaver* magazine sent to him overseas. That soldier was Walter McFarlane. On the cover of the September 1944 issue which reached him, was a photo I had taken in Northern Ontario of a Peterborough canoe being loaded by two men, white pine branches arcing out over the water, framing the distant, rockbound wilderness shores. McFarlane, familiar with such terrain, asked in his letter if the cover picture was taken in Quebec, a natural conclusion since the wilderness areas of the two provinces are much alike.

Following this first communication there was a period when I was in the wilderness where no mail reached me. Then one day I got a letter postmarked somewhere in Upstate New York. He had just come out of the Adirondacks from a back-pack trip. 'To get the war out of my system' he wrote.

At Fort William [now Thunder Bay] Ontario, I saw McFarlane for the first time in the flesh. We were to make a canoe trip together. From the ship's rail I caught sight of him at the far end of a two-hundred-foot dock. He came in strides that would have left the average good hiker trailing far behind. Since the ship was to lay over we took advantage of having breakfast aboard.

Naturally, there was a mutual sizing up. At first, I thought him sort of gangly in his scant six feet. When I shook hands with him, and having been accused myself of having a bone-crushing grip, I found that his hands were slender but deceptively strong. A close-up of McFarlane would suggest a face homely-handsome, like Abraham Lincoln. There was none of the arty pretense about his appearance to self-style him as an artist. His hair, short-cropped and thin, his face smooth-shaven, he might have passed muster about anywhere in conventional life. That is, until you engaged him in conversation. Then you found him somewhat alien to the establishment and quite shy. Perhaps it was less common shyness and more an apparent effort on his part to be overly considerate of your viewpoint, though at the same time ready to annihilate your opinions. Humour? He has it, and to go with it an inexhaustible repertoire of amusing ancedotes.

After our canoe travel, the northern Ontario wilderness became even a greater lure for McFarlane than his

oft-boasted Adirondacks. By the time he made his next trip back to my cabin, then situated at the boundary waters of the Superior National Forest, he had concluded that the Ontario wilderness was where he would reside, earn his subsistence by whatever means available, and paint. His competence as a woodsman made employment no problem. Whether it was with the Forestry Service, or staking claims for mining interests, his reputation as a woodsman grew, until demand for his services often exceeded his immediate needs. Contrary to the captive economy of the city, a month's employment in the wilderness can mean months of leisure there – a formula he discovered and used to his advantage.

You would, thus, find him periodically dodging employment, comfortably ensconced and painting in a pulp shack, or any other convenient wilderness shelter where rent, heat, water, and diversion were free. Even food might have been included to the extent of meat and fish, except that to him wildlife was never game. 'You don't murder your friends to survive' he would say. But his 'friends' were not always conserved. Indians occasionally brought him meat and fish. He did not abuse their offers. He isn't, after all, a vegetarian.

His sensitiveness to the wildlife around him has play in the following, simple but perhaps significant, little episode:

A field mouse, Mr Farnsworth by name, took up residence in McFarlane's cabin. Fed regularly at mealtime, he got to be quite chummy. But then one day Farnsworth, who turned out to be female chewed up a sleeve of McFarlane's best Pendleton wool shirt to 'feather' her nest. She would have to go. She was carried in a small birch-bark tube closed at both ends with caribou moss, and released at a small lake several miles distant. The next morning when McFarlane was having his breakfast, Farnsworth returned and was allowed to stay.

McFarlane was not yet painting with fervour. He seemed too absorbed in the magic of the wilds. Nevertheless, he showed up one morning at my cabin on the boundary, a big, finished canvas under his arm, and an expression of achievement. It was an oil of two weathered bushmen in front of a lean-to, enjoying a backlog night fire. One could almost warm one's hands from the imparted realism of the flames. Sparks from the campfire did not look like yellow dabs of paint but like live embers shooting upward. The composition suggested Sabin's '. . . a spark, a flame, the wilderness is home.'

'Let me show this' I said, 'to the art director of an advertising firm I know.'

A few weeks later I phoned the director who welcomed me but seemed bored at the prospect of seeing just one more unimpressive effort. Would-be artists by the score continually plagued him with talentless work. He looked at the painting, even studied it closely, and said 'McFarlane has a good piece of work here. I can't use this particular subject, but I will give him some assignments.' I saw, as the saying goes, an economic 'light at the end of the tunnel' for McFarlane, and went to him with the good news.

His reaction should not have surprised me. 'No one' he angrily protested, 'is going to tell me what to paint.' He walked outside and over to a pulpwood stump, impaled the painting, destroying it.

Late one night McFarlane and I sat in my island cabin, having our usual bull session of trying to screen out life's potential values. 'I'd like to live in Canada' he reflected. The prospect seemed to hold a solution for his

'Indian Mother at Tea Fire,' an oil by Walter McFarlane.

wilderness outlook. 'Let's go' I said. 'When?' he asked. 'Now' I replied. The night was a bit rough, with a heavy overcast, a jet black forest, and a running sea. We, nevertheless, packed, loaded the canoe, and were off to a parked station wagon on a mainland back road.

McFarlane stayed in Canada and has been a landed immigrant since 1956. He found most leisure to contemplate the wilds and to paint when he was employed in forestry fire towers. Here was the good life for him in a single package: a livable cabin in a remote wilderness, wages, and ample interludes between forest fire vigils to pursue his art. But the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests saw expedience and economy in dispensing with fire towers in favor of air patrol. The years that McFarlane spent in the towers and the other periodic wilderness employment had, however, permitted him to save some money, so that he faced the prospect of total leisure to devote to his art without qualms.

It was at this point that Les Kouba, wildlife artist, owner and curator of the American Wildlife Art Galleries in Minneapolis, agreed to consider some of McFarlane's black and white sketches for sale. These were shipped to the Galleries, followed by several oils. All sold readily.

Knowing McFarlane's small regard for material things, I do not believe that it was the remuneration which this work brought that spurred him on to paint more diligently. But if art critics and knowledgeable art collectors were willing to loosen their purse strings to acquire his work, it was, he reasoned, incentive enough. Now he realized that when he applied himself, his paintings would be accepted, though he was to discover that he had yet to face the severest critic of all – himself. Fear of failing to select the proper subject, of becoming lost in the creative maze while seeking the extraordinary result – these were to plague him. Nevertheless, paint began to fly from his palette, and if we are to judge by the end product, the paint landed in the right places. ◆

THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS BEAVER

BY J.-ARMAND TREMBLAY

IN ORDER THAT YOU may fully appreciate this story, I must first tell you of a little incident which was to guarantee the survival of the beaver in Quebec and was also to radically change the living conditions of the Indians. It was in 1930. There were only a handful of beaver families left in the whole area of James Bay which had been known to produce the most beautiful pelts. The Indians there lived in misery and abject poverty and the meat of the beaver had far more value to them than its skin.

That year an Indian by the name of Andrew Weskeychon, made the trip to Rupert House to tell J. S. Watt, the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company store, that he had found a beaver lodge and family on his hunting territory. He wanted to be provided with a canoe, a gun and some food supplies so that he could take the pelts. Then Watt made an alternative proposal to the Indian. 'So you have found a beaver family on your grounds' he said. 'Well, I'll buy your beavers if you leave them in peace and make a report each year.' The deal was concluded on the spot and Mr Watt paid for the beavers from his personal savings. Soon other Indians arrived to make identical arrangements and word spread that beavers reproduce very quickly (at least four offspring each year) when left in peace.

Ten years after the beginning of the Rupert House preserve, a certain degree of prosperity came back to the area. After seeing the great increase of beaver on this first preserve, the Indians from the neighbouring tribe of the Great Mistassini Lake asked that the same system be applied in their territory, despite the sacrifices this would demand of them in their extremely poor circumstances. The preserves sprung up throughout Northern Quebec.

In 1943 the Quebec government, through its Hunting and Fisheries Department, decided to emphasize its presence at Mistassini Lake by building a fish and game lodge there.

While the station was being built, I had to make several trips to survey the preserve as Inspector from the Fur Division of the Quebec government. According to the terms of the agreement between the Indians and the government, no one was to take any beaver until he could count ten lodges, that is ten families, on his territory.

During one of these trips, I was told through an interpreter that one of the older trappers on the reserve wished to speak to me. Joe Matawashis had to be 75, perhaps even 80. It was difficult to know the age of the old Indians in those days, just as it was difficult to know the exact number of their natural or adopted children.

Joe had nine beaver lodges on his grounds. He was one short. He was so persuaded of the value of the project that he could not bring himself to break the rule nor seek the special permit from the Great Manitou in Quebec City which would have allowed him to do so. 'Me old' translated the interpreter, 'Me die before getting ten houses. No meat from young beaver.' To grant him the permission would have meant granting it as well to every other Indian in the same situation; so I refused immediately and returned to Quebec.

At the time, I had not fully realized that Joe could die before he had a chance to taste the meat of a young beaver again. And he had done without for so many years! On my return to Quebec City I was haunted by my refusal. What was one beaver more or less . . .

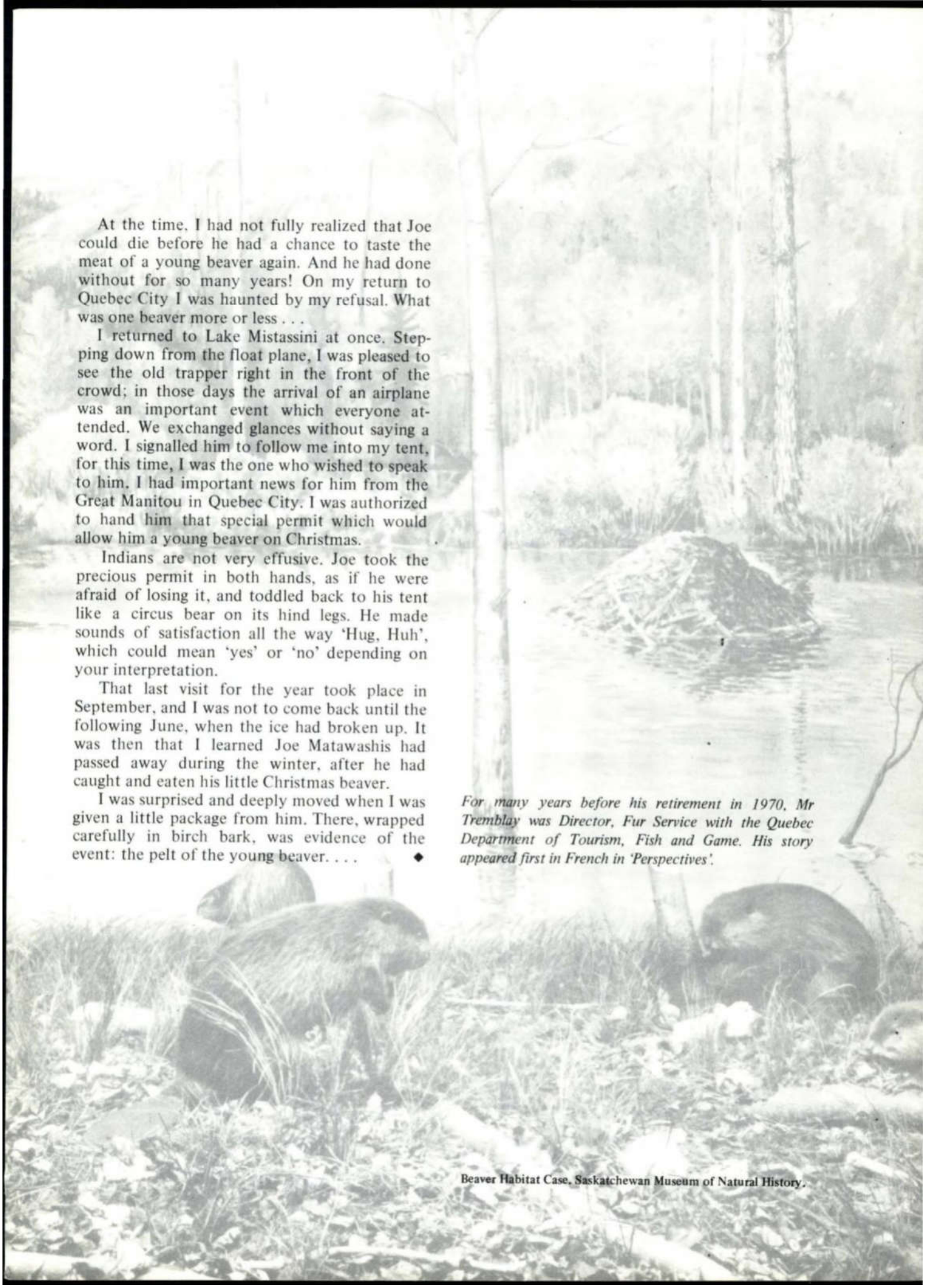
I returned to Lake Mistassini at once. Stepping down from the float plane, I was pleased to see the old trapper right in the front of the crowd; in those days the arrival of an airplane was an important event which everyone attended. We exchanged glances without saying a word. I signalled him to follow me into my tent, for this time, I was the one who wished to speak to him. I had important news for him from the Great Manitou in Quebec City. I was authorized to hand him that special permit which would allow him a young beaver on Christmas.

Indians are not very effusive. Joe took the precious permit in both hands, as if he were afraid of losing it, and toddled back to his tent like a circus bear on its hind legs. He made sounds of satisfaction all the way 'Hug, Huh', which could mean 'yes' or 'no' depending on your interpretation.

That last visit for the year took place in September, and I was not to come back until the following June, when the ice had broken up. It was then that I learned Joe Matawashis had passed away during the winter, after he had caught and eaten his little Christmas beaver.

I was surprised and deeply moved when I was given a little package from him. There, wrapped carefully in birch bark, was evidence of the event: the pelt of the young beaver. . . . ◆

For many years before his retirement in 1970, Mr Tremblay was Director, Fur Service with the Quebec Department of Tourism, Fish and Game. His story appeared first in French in 'Perspectives'.



Beaver Habitat Case, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History.

NORTHERN BOOKS

SCULPTURE OF THE ESKIMO

By George Swinton. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1972. 255 pages. Illus. $18.50

Reviewed by Frank B. Walker

Some twenty years ago, about this season of the year, dozens of trestle tables used to be set up in a rather bare room on the third floor of Hudson's Bay House in Winnipeg and there the annual crop of Eskimo carvings was laid out for the attention and the marvel of the interested. There were not, in those days, too many such, but among the relatively few who did appear was George Swinton, a young teacher of art at the University of Manitoba.

So began a love affair which grew from the first tentative excitement to culminate in the knowledge and perception contained in this handsome volume, *Sculpture of the Eskimo*. In the process both parties have gained, Swinton by an enlargement of his own mind and experience and the Eskimo artists by the understanding and enthusiasm of a friend in the outside world.

I do not know of any volume on the subject, and few dealing with Canadian matters, which goes so far to fulfil the hopes and intentions of its author. There are times when the writing bothers one, for Swinton's true projections are inwardly and outwardly visual rather than verbal, as one might expect of a man who in his own right is a painter of note. Nonetheless, if on occasion the reader is forced to work rather harder than he should, the rewards, if he chooses to do so, are ample.

Swinton goes back to the earliest known Eskimo carvings of the Dorset and Thule cultures and he has some interesting, if provocative, words on the differences between the two; the one 'gruesome and bloody', essentially Alaskan and perhaps Asian, the other more particularly native Canadian. He tells us, too, that the Dorset figures are predominantly male, the Thule predominantly female, which would suggest to me that somewhere a missing link exists in our knowledge of the Dorset culture.

Despite its relatively recent popularity among whites both in Canada and Europe, Eskimo carving was not a sudden flowering. It has been a continuous part of Eskimo life, as indeed such activities have been part of the life of every group of human beings. The early explorers noted the capacity and the skill of the Eskimos in such matters. Modern communications, the pioneer work of the Hudson's Bay Company and James Houston combined to bring these comparatively unknown works to public attention and in so doing performed an economic service to the Eskimo and an aesthetic service to the rest of us.

The illustrations are both lavish and informative. Any library of Canadiana should have it, and few books would serve as a better introduction to the outsider and the stranger.

Frank B. Walker is Editor in Chief, The Montreal Star.

THE CANADIAN INDIAN: A HISTORY SINCE 1500

By E. Palmer Patterson. Collier-Macmillan. Don Mills, Ontario, 1972. 210 pages, illus. maps. $6.95

Reviewed by Douglas Leechman

This is a difficult book; difficult to read, and difficult to review. Its virtues are outstanding and so also, unfortunately, are its defects.

The author, Dr E. Palmer Patterson of the Department of History of the University of Waterloo, has read his sources carefully, and quoted from them extensively, and there was an enormous number of them if his bibliographies are a true indication of the extent of his research. In spite of all this, it is hardly 'the first complete and comprehensive history of the Canadian Indian' as the publishers' blurb would have us believe, for it is neither of these. It is true, though, that the author approaches his subject in an unfamiliar but satisfactory way. His comparison of various phases of Indian administration and assimilation with similar processes in other parts of the world has thrown new light on them and, perhaps, indicated new ways of attacking the numerous difficulties still confronting us.

Some of the omissions from discussion are interesting and puzzling. The Eskimos, for instance, to give but one example, are given scant treatment indeed and do not even appear on the map of linguistic groups. Now, if the 'Indians' are the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas, surely the Eskimos qualify and their history is just as important as that of any other group.

The proof-reading is poor and irritating. The index is largely a mere list of proper names, of persons and places, not of ideas or subjects discussed. The word 'tribe' though given important treatment on p. 157, does not appear in the index, but 'Queen Anne' does, though we are told nothing at all about her. The editor did not catch the use of

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'convince' where 'persuade' was intended, nor 'tactic' used as a singular form of 'tactics'.

The notes at the end of the chapters are a nuisance. They involve endless page turning, for the reader must make sure whether the reference is merely 'Ibid:, p. 123' or a note of enough importance to have been included in the main body of text.

The illustrations have not reproduced well, and this may be because the cuts were not well suited to the paper.

Altogether this is a book that every anthropologist should have on his shelves, for it may give him a new look at an old and distressing problem. What a pity that more attention was not given to details which, though some may find them trivial, do, nevertheless, grate on the sensibilities.

Dr Leechman, author and lexicographer, was formerly anthropologist at the National Museum of Canada.

HISTORICAL ESSAYS ON THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

Compiled by Donald Swainson. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1971. 312 pages, paperback, $3.95

Reviewed by Hartwell Bowsfield

Collections of essays such as Donald Swainson has compiled on the prairie provinces are the most difficult of all publications to review. Such compilations are always useful by bringing together material from scattered sources. For this one should be grateful. But no compilation will satisfy everyone. Every reader will have his own version of what should have been included.

Since Professor Swainson has not chosen articles on the basis of a specific subject or theme, readers will undoubtedly question his selection. They will wonder why particular articles which they consider of significance have not been included. They should, therefore, be aware of his frame of reference. His purpose, he states, was first an attempt to illustrate the quality of 'western historical writing'. (This should be understood as meaning historical writing about the west since all the writers are not westerners.) Second, his concern was with the prairies 'during the era of settled and permanent communities'. Exploration and the fur trade are excluded. He wished also to provide representative writings from material published in each province. Manitoba, he admits, receives a preponderance of attention because it has the oldest historical society and 'the longest and most mature historiographical tradition'. Finally, to illustrate the work of 19th century historians he includes excerpts from Alexander Ross, Alexander Begg, and J. J. Hargrave. These are all legitimate purposes – and carried out. Whether this has resulted in a collection of the best or most significant material on the west is doubtful. Professor Swainson has perhaps cast his net too wide forcing on himself a limitation in the selective process. The result is, as he admits, that many of the essays are concerned more with local problems than with the 'great themes of metropolitanism and protest'. *But* those very themes, whether traditional or passé, are fundamental to the story of the west and certainly not unworthy of consideration for a compilation.

A compilation around such themes would have resulted in a more structured volume. As it is there is no unifying theme here. Nor is there – other than what appears to be a chronological arrangement – any design based on the compiler's purposes. The essays cover such diverse areas as politics, agricultural organizations, ethnic groups, settlement, and the reform movement. The items are not grouped by subject, province, writer, or source. The multi-purpose approach to the compilation militates against such a grouping. An article on Big Bear is found between Donald Creighton's essay on Macdonald and Craig Brown's article on nationalism in western newspapers; an article by John Saywell on politics and the Lieutenant-Governor in Saskatchewan and Alberta is between an article on W. R. Motherwell and a history of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association.

These criticisms are admittedly a highly subjective reaction to the volume. How can one be too critical of a collection that brings together in one volume such items as Donald Creighton's controversial piece 'John A. Macdonald, Confederation, and the West', W. L. Morton's interpretive article 'The Bias of Prairie Politics', and Kenneth McNaught's perceptive analysis 'J. S. Woodsworth and a Political Party for Labour, 1896-1921'? Though two of these articles have now been reprinted in other volumes of collected essays they could not be ignored in any collection on the prairie provinces and Professor Swainson's volume can be commended solely for their inclusion.

Mr Bowsfield, lecturer in history and archivist at York University, served for many years as provinicial archivist of Manitoba.

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THE FAMILY LIFE OF BIRDS

By Hans Dossenbach and Emil Buhrer. McGraw-Hill, Scarborough, 1971. 192 pages, illus. $15.25

Reviewed by D. H. Schwanke

If you are a bird lover, you will be impressed with the lavish illustrations of this book. Colour photographs throughout, and many drawings and graphs. As the title says, the book deals with the propagation of birds, their courtship behaviour, nesting habits, eggs, and the feeding of their young. The book is very readable and full of little bits of assorted knowledge, and it points out that birds' actions are mainly based on physiology and instinct.

The Family Life of Birds would be a wonderful book if only the author would refrain from talking about 'Wives', 'Concubines', 'Apartment Houses', and other distracting anthropomorphic topics. Besides these jarring notes, the designer of the book tries too much to impress upon the reader that he is an artist by placing drawings and photographs in rather 'artsy' arrays, having colour overlays in the oddest places, and switching type faces till your head swims. To top it off, the type faces are hard to read. Presumably the illustrations should complement the text: alas, they interrupt and make the book more of an item to be left on your coffee table for glancing at now and again rather than reading.

Mr Schwanke is a naturalist and editor of the publication of the Manitoba Zoological and Naturalists Societies.

ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE (1730-1808) AND THE EXPANSION OF BRITISH TRADE

By Howard T. Fry. University of Toronto Press, 1970. 330 pages. $12.00.

Reviewed by E. E. Rich

Much of the career, and much of the biography, of Alexander Dalrymple would at first sight seem to have little to do with the normal interests of readers of *The Beaver*, or of students of Canadian history. But this would be a facile misjudgement, for although he was not directly concerned with the American continent until after Cook's third voyage of 1778-80 had taken the explorer north up the American coast to be stopped by ice at Bering Strait, all of Dalrymple's previous knowledge and convictions then went into the great *Plan for promoting the Fur-trade, and securing it to this country, by Uniting the Operations of the East India and Hudson's Bay Companys.* The *Plan* was published in 1789 and was to a large extent the outcome of the possibilities which had been opened up by Cook – the possibility that a lucrative fur trade might be managed from the Pacific Coast of America to China, the possibility that a waterway might be found in the part of the coast from Nootka Sound north to 65° which had not been investigated by Cook, and the possibility that a water-route might lie westwards from Churchill and that the barrier of ice which had stopped Cook might be seasonal.

At that time Dalrymple was employed as Hydrographer to the East India Company, a post which had been created for him in 1779 and which he held until he became Hydrographer to the Navy (again a post created for him) in 1795. He brought to the problems of the organization of British trade in the period after the American Revolution a passionate interest in the East Indies trade and an unrivalled knowledge of the history of that trade. He had begun his career as a Writer at Madras had studied all the journals and accounts which he could get hold of, and had revealed a lively imagination in his proposals and actual voyages to organize a trade to China based on skill in sailing against the prevailing monsoon and on the strategic position of the Sulu Archipelago and the Island of Balambangan. Wars and mismanagement brought these plans to nothing, but Dalrymple had returned to England with so great a reputation that he was intimately involved in the discussions which preceded Cook's first voyage. Strongly supported by the Royal Society, he would have been in command of the expedition if the Society could have had its way and if the Admiralty could have been persuaded to allow a naval vessel to be commanded by anyone but a naval officer. He certainly contributed much to Cook's thinking, and his two-volume *Collection of the Several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean* was taken by Cook on the second voyage.

Dalrymple, too, played an active part in preparing the account of Cook's third voyage for publication, and it was as he brought his own interest in China and East India trade into relation with the possibilities revealed by the third voyage that he made his contribution to Canadian history. As he watched over the post-Cook voyages of Hanna, Strange, Barkley, Meares, Dixon, and Duncan, trying to establish a China trade in furs on the one hand and to find a passage across the continent on the other, he read up the Dobbs-Middleton episode, studied the account of Hearne's journey to the mouth of the Coppermine, tried to reconcile Peter Pond's notions with those of Hearne and with the accurate observations of Philip Turnor. He dined regularly with Samuel Wegg, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was allowed access to the Company's documents; he had unique opportunities for bringing together a compendious geographical and historical knowledge, information from the Canton traders, from the Hudson's Bay men, from the North Westers and from the Admiralty. Fearful that the North Westers might turn away from Britain (as Peter Pond had shown signs of doing when he took his proposals to Washington), Dalrymple favoured the Hudson's Bay Company for one side of his proposal: that goods of British manufacture and furs of Canadian extraction should be got to the Pacific Coast overland across the American continent. The East India Company, with its power and privilege and its knowledge of eastern trade, would provide the other leg of his design.

Dalrymple's *Plan for the Fur-trade* commanded support. But there was much to be done in 1789 before it could be put into operation. Apart from the reticencies and apathy of the two great companies and the inconsistencies in the narratives of Pond and of Hearne, it was necessary to explore the coast further, to ascertain whether the old legends of de Fuca and de Fonte might embody a true account of a mid-continental passage, to work westwards from Churchill to find the best way to Athabasca, to probe into Chesterfield Inlet. The Nootka Sound episode held up the despatch of the *Discovery* to the Pacific Coast, and when she sailed, under Vancouver's command, in 1790 the result was both to discount the likelihood of any strait being found in mid-continent and to discredit the 'closet philosophers' whom Vancouver rather sourly berated for urging such speculative proposals. The efforts put in hand by Captain Charles Duncan to make a route westwards from Churchill proved equally frustrating, and Dalrymple's *Plan for the Fur-trade* fell into the background as he busied himself with his pioneer work as Hydrographer. A measure of the man's industry and knowledge can be gauged from the fact that in his first year as Hydrographer to the East India Company he had analysed over a thousand journals. He was unique, and when the Admiralty created its own office in 1795 Dalrymple was the obvious choice; he held the post until he was retired, in some dudgeon, in 1808, shortly before his death.

The *Plan for the Fur-trade*, as such, came to nothing. But it had brought great knowledge, and great co-ordination, to the problems of North America. In all its essentials it anticipated the views of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, both as an explorer and as a trade-planner. There is no evidence that Mackenzie and Dalrymple ever met, but Dalrymple's *Plan* was published in 1789 and Mackenzie was in London for the winter 1791-92. They had a common acquaintance in Philip Turnor, and it is almost unthinkable that Mackenzie should not have known of the *Plan* which bore so close a likeness to his own proposals for a Fur and Fishery Company which would enjoy all the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, the East India Company, and the South Sea Company. Here, as throughout, Dr Fry does not press his evidence, though he leaves us with a strong possibility in mind. Indeed, throughout this closely argued and thoroughly documented study the almost inevitable tendency for a biography to become partisan is notably lacking. The ease with which

the narrative flows does not impair the scholarly exactness of the work, nor does the weight of knowledge check the interest. The *Plan for the Fur-trade* was but a small part of the grand strategy for imperial trade into which Dalrymple's tremendous knowledge coalesced. In itself it is well worth reading; and it may so fascinate those who approach it solely from a Canadian point of view that they will find themselves taking an unwonted interest in the monsoons, the Sulu venture, and Cochin China!

Professor Rich, Master of St Catharine's College, Cambridge, and for many years general editor of the Company's Record Society volumes, is the author of 'The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870' among other publications.

PIONEERS AND EARLY CITIZENS OF MANITOBA

Compiled by The Manitoba Library Association, Peguis Publishers, Winnipeg, 1971. 268 pages. $9.50

Reviewed by Shirlee Smith

The sub-title of this book is *A Dictionary of Manitoba Biography from the earliest times to 1920*. It has approximately 526 entries ranging from such well known entrepreneurs as Lord Selkirk and George Simpson to lesser known pioneers – Alfred Spencer, a farmer, and William Ross, a fur trader.

It is not difficult to be adversely critical of such a book, particularly as one can always carp about why some names were included while others were excluded. In the latter list, Kelsey, Radisson, and the d'Iberviles, men who gained immortality for their exploits in Manitoba, come to mind. Many of the biographies which should have been included are available from the publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. However, it appears that research was confined to Wallace's *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, which covers only seven volumes of the 27 published by the Society.

The Committee responsible for this volume consisted of six women, all able librarians, so surely one is justified in considering it a phenomenon that there are only six biographies of females in the book. Missing are such capable administrators as Sister Marie-Louise Valade, Sister Marie-Eulalie Lagrave, and Miss Matilda Davis. The Sisters belonged to the Order of the Grey Nuns and arrived in the Red River Settlement in 1844. Miss Davis was the headmistress of a school for girls which opened in the 1850s. This comment is not a prejudiced barb, but a sobering thought on the historical status of women in Manitoba.

The book seems to have been hastily compiled with not enough editorial direction. In the entry for Robert Ballantyne, page 9, it is stated that 'He came to Rupert's Land as a clerk with the Hudson's Bay Company . . .' Rupert's Land consisted of 1,486,000 square miles. Why not simply say where Mr. Ballantyne served? The information is available from his book *Hudson Bay*. It is assumed that Eden Colvile, who once represented Beauharnois in the Canadian Parliament, is included because he lived in the Province from 1850 to 1852, but this point is not mentioned. There are a number of historical inaccuracies, and in an eighteen line biography of Alexander Hunter Murray there are six errors.

The pioneers of this province certainly deserve to have their deeds accurately documented. The Manitoba Library Association has made a start. The next step is an expanded and corrected edition of this book.

Mrs Smith is Public Relations Officer (History) for the Hudson's Bay Company.

YUKON TROPHY TRAILS

By Dolores Cline Brown. Gray's Publishing Ltd., Sidney, B.C. 1971. 213 pages, $7.50.

Reviewed by Flo Whyard

Dolores Brown says in the introduction to her entertaining new book: 'I arrived fifty years too late for the Klondike, but not too late to put the first footprints made by a white woman on many of the big-game trails of the Yukon. Gold could not buy the happy comradeship I have shared around Yukon campfires with my husband, our Indian guides and those sportsmen who participated with us in the enjoyment and appreciation of the great hunting areas of the Wind, Bonnet Plume and Snake Rivers.'

Portions of the book had appeared earlier in *Outdoor Life, Field & Stream* and *The Alaska Sportsman*, which may explain the feeling that continuity is missing at times, but that is a minor matter because the book is easy reading. Mrs Brown has packed a good deal of personal experience into the pages which will be equally fascinating to non-hunting types and to the big game experts about whom she writes.

Like another adventurous woman from the lower 48 who came to the Yukon to find her fate—Martha Louise Black—Dolores Cline Brown tells a good story, and her writing has that solid touch of authenticity which permits her the occasional flight into fancy. It isn't all about tracking and hunting big game; as camp cook, culinary triumphs and disasters were just as vital to her on the trophy trail as scaring away the grizzlies, and the chapter of recipes for turning moosemeat into a gourmet's delight will be popular.

Several references to photographic shooting of big game throughout the book make it even more frustrating that there are no illustrations except for the dust-cover portrait of the author; perhaps the next edition could amend this? And to a northern reader, it is rather irritating when Mrs Brown has her Indian guides and wranglers speak in such broken English; many of them attended school and are certainly more articulate than they are delineated here. At times, one gets a picture of the Colonel's lady supervising the old plantation staff.

But she writes vividly and with a wicked sense of humour which she is not loath to aim at herself so it is easy to forgive the odd error in name spelling which should bother only longtime residents of the Mayo area. It is like Old Home Week, running into so many northern friends who appear on these pages as part of the story – bush pilots, hunters, guides, prospectors and just plain Yukoners. They all spring into living colour as she applies her own artistic touches against a broad-stroked background of magnificent scenery in the high hills of the Yukon.

The endpaper map is a big help in orienting the reader and may be of special interest in years to come if present plans for developing copper claims in the Bonnet Plume area are carried through. The reader will be grateful that Dolores and Louis Brown did not abandon game-guiding careers for mineral promotion until this book was written. We hope there will be another.

Flo Whyard, former editor of the 'Whitehorse Star' is Canadian editor of 'Alaska' Magazine.

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